

THE NATIONAL SMOKEJUMPER
ASSOCIATION

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JULY 2015

SMOKEJUMPER



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Message from the President



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

When I wrote the article for the April 2015 issue of *Smokejumper* magazine, I made mention that the NSA Board of Directors had submitted a list of eight questions to the U.S. Forest Service, so we might have a better understanding of the complicated issues surrounding the decision-making process related to the selection of future parachute systems.

I want to voice my thanks to Tim DeHaas, national smokejumper program manager, and Mike Fritsen (MSO-95), Missoula base manager, for their cooperation and assistance in getting answers to many of the questions and for additional information they were able to provide.

Here is the original list of questions submitted:

- What is the **current cost** for each parachute system on a per-jumper basis?
- What is the length of time and the cost involved to train a jumper to the point of **initial proficiency** on each system?

- What is the time and cost required to **maintain proficiency** on each of the systems?
- Is there a difference in the **configuration of aircraft** for the two systems?
- Are there **safety considerations** unique to each of the parachute systems?
- Are there differences in **injury rates** between the two parachute systems?
- Are there differences in the **cost of injuries/medical care** between the two parachute systems (both initial care and long-term care)?
- Will a change to a single parachute system for both the BLM and the USFS provide a **demonstrable advantage** over the present two-system mode?
- If there are **compelling reasons** for eliminating "mixed" loads of rounds and squares, what are they?

I had submitted additional questions to Mike Fritsen, all in an effort to gather information that would help educate our NSA membership as to the functioning of the two different systems currently being used. These include the FS-14, which is a round chute, and the ram-air chute, sometimes called a "square."

Here are my questions and Mike's responses:

Cherry: To what degree do the FS-14 and the ram-air have capability for being sized to the weight of the individual jumpers?

Fritsen: The FS-14 is made in three sizes – small, medium and large – to accommodate jumpers

from 120 to 200 pounds. The current ram-air canopies (DC-7 and CR-360) that are approved for smokejumper use are made in one size that accommodates jumpers from 120 to 200 pounds.

Cherry: What is the “dead-air” forward speed of each system?

Fritsen: We use the term “air speed.” The FS-14 – 9 mph at full-run. Seven-cell ram-air canopies – 20-25 mph at full-run depending on wing loading.

Cherry: What is the maximum air speed allowed for deploying jumpers with each system?

Fritsen: I’m assuming you’re asking about maximum wind speed, or drift. FS-14 – 550 yards, 15-mph ground wind; DC-7 or CR360 – 1200 yards, 32 mph. These maximums are a “guide” as many considerations are taken into account when spotting smokejumpers. When all considerations are taken into account and mitigated, and both spotter/jumper concur that the jump can be

conducted safely, the jump can progress.

If you’re asking about the maximum safe airspeed that a jumper can exit the aircraft, both systems are compliant with TSOs (technical standard orders) that ensure that they can safely deploy up to 150 KEAS (knots equivalent air speed).

Cherry: What is the glide ratio for each system?

Fritsen: FS-14 – 1:1, DC-7 or CR-360 – average of 2:1. Expressed as feet forward to feet vertical for both canopies, this would change when wind is introduced or different brake settings are used. For both canopies, the jumper can reduce the glide ratio with toggle settings, but not increase it.

Cherry: Is there a minimum height above ground where maneuvering (i.e., turns, etc.) should not be done?

Fritsen: Yes, on either canopy (FS-14, DC-7, or CR-360) a jumper should be on final heading by 100 feet AGL (above ground level) and making only subtle corrections from there.

Cherry: Are there risks or dangers associated with making last-second maneuvers on either system?

Fritsen: Yes, jumpers have been seriously injured on both types of canopies when making drastic maneuvers too close to the ground.

Cherry: What is the minimum elevation above ground level (AGL) desired for jumping with each system?

Fritsen: Round – 1,500 feet AGL, ram-air – 3,000 feet AGL.

Cherry: What components make up the equipment for each system? (Main, reserve, etc. perhaps done with a photo showing each part but not the jump suit, helmet, etc.)

Fritsen: I will see if I can get someone to render photos of the equipment in the near future. We don’t have a photo to show you now, but the reunion will be a good opportunity to see the equipment for each system.

Description (step-by-step) of how each system is deployed on the jump (static line, self-deployed, etc.):

BLM ram-air – Drogue parachute is static-line deployed to orient and stabilize the jumper. At “pull-thousand” (approximately five seconds into the jump), the jumper pulls the drogue release handle and the drogue parachute is released. This action pulls the main parachute from the container on the jumper’s back. The lines deploy first, then the parachute from the deployment bag.

For a video of the ram-air deployment sequence, type

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Smokejumper base abbreviations:

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

this address into your web browser: www.youtube.com/watch?v=3sv3n1tzTvE&feature=youtu.be

FS-14 round – Jumper exits the aircraft, the static line pulls the parachute deployment bag from the container, lines are deployed, and then the parachute (approximately four seconds into the jump).

Cherry: What does each system cost with all the components included?

Fritsen: \$8,500 for round vs. \$19,000, so roughly double. These figures are the state of the current situation. The Forest Service has not yet explored avenues to reduce costs associated with manufacturing or industry alternatives and procurement.

Cherry: How is the “use-life” of each system determined?

Fritsen: In both the BLM and Forest Service we use the terms “service life” and “shelf life.” The FS-14 has a shelf life of three years, plus the service life of 12 years or 100 jumps – whichever comes first – based on military service-life standards. The BLM currently has a 10-year service-life standard based on acquisition schedules.

The current standard is being studied with the proposal to shift to a 20-year or 300-jump service life in the BLM. It’s reasonable to assume that Forest Service ram-air canopy service life will be at least the same as rounds.

Cherry: Do the systems have any significant difference in their ability to “hang-up” safely in a timber jump?

Fritsen: This has not been determined and no difference in significant injuries between canopies has pointed to this as a contributing factor.

Cherry: Have there been any problems related to having “split-loads” jumping the same fire?

Fritsen: We use the term “mixed loads,” but none has been encountered that introduces more operational risk. The Forest Service and BLM have been jumping mixed loads for over 20 years. There are times when, due to jump spot selection or wind conditions, adjustments are made to accommodate one canopy type or the other.

DURING A CONFERENCE call that included Tim, Mike, Chuck Sheley and me, we had the opportunity to cover some additional questions as well. We spent some time discussing the issue of malfunctions and how they’re addressed. Some of the malfunctions “old-timers” had to consider are now of little concern (line over, inversion, twisted risers, etc.) because of the many improvements made in the FS-14.

There have been some issues with broken steering lines, and the cause for that is not fully known. With

the ram-air, if there’s a serious malfunction, the jumper would cut away from the main canopy and deploy the reserve (also a “square”). There is no system for cutting away the round, so one would need to deploy the reserve and come down with both chutes deployed.

One malfunction for the ram-air could be the “drogue-in-tow” where the drogue was deployed upon exit from the plane, but when the jumper attempts to deploy the main canopy, it is not successfully released. (The procedure is too detailed to describe here but it would be a good question to ask when visiting the jump base during the reunion.)

Another potential danger for a jumper on the ram-air is the misjudging of his/her landing, flaring the chute at the wrong time and causing a sudden stall and drop. However, additional time is given to training on the ram-air as compared to the FS-14.

Initial training on the ram-air includes approximately 20 jumps whereas the FS-14 includes 15 jumps. Refreshers involve 4-5 jumps on the ram-air and 3-5 on the FS-14. For both systems during the season, there would be at least one jump required every 30 days.

It is my hope that this information proves helpful toward aiding your understanding of the two systems being used, and it will serve as a platform for your being able to ask further questions during the reunion as you visit the jump base in July.

Safe travels. See you there.



L–R: Rufus Robinson, Frank Derry, and Earl Cooley

The Selected Few and “The List”

by Chuck Sheley (Cave Junction '59)

Keeping in mind our 75th Anniversary Reunion, and the fact that we are all growing older, I have decided to share some information concerning important smokejumper history. As managing editor of *Smokejumper*, and a historian at heart, I have for many years tried to nail down how, when, and where smokejumpers began to be recruited by the CIA to carry out special operations – world wide.

Over the years I've read pages of written documents from William Leary's Air America collection at the University of Texas at Dallas. Numerous books chronicle operations in other locations. After 40 years there is nothing secret about the outstanding work these individuals have done under some of the most difficult circumstances.

Some individuals have requested that their names be left off the list and that request is honored, even though their names are public record and some have given interviews to authors of books.

One of the main reasons for recognizing these men for their service is that we should record an accurate list of smokejumpers who were involved. As you can see from the April issue of *Smokejumper*, history can be changed and rewritten.

It is common knowledge from many written sources that smokejumpers have been involved in numerous far-flung operations from Tibet and India to the Congo, from Cuba and South America to the North Pole, and from Arizona to Vietnam. Finally to Laos where a cadre of smokejumper air operations officers and ground support officers fought side by side with indigenous Lao troops and General Vang Pao's Hmong army in their 15-year battle against the North Vietnamese. This war, known as the “Secret War,” became the final chapter in the lives of seven former smokejumpers employed as Air America “kickers” and one who was employed as a pilot (Charles Dieffenbach/GAC-56). Further, there was a case officer (Jerry Daniels/MSO-58) who died in Bangkok, Thailand, under suspicious circumstances, and another pilot (Frank Odom/MYC-63) who was shot down in Zambia, Africa.

All information was obtained from public sources. There are many books and websites available to anyone who wants to research the subject. A sample of these sources will be listed in this issue. Over the years many articles have been published in *Smokejumper*.

Back in November of 2002, I was communicating with Jim Veitch (MSO-67) while working on a story

about the “Ravens.” We were communicating about Jim's time in SEA, and I asked about recording smokejumper/CIA work in that part of the world. His response was very thought provoking:

“I was in charge of Saravane for about six months. One Raven died there and two others were shot down.

“As far as giving info on what went on with the Agency, it's fine with me. I would like to see the emphasis put on smokejumping.

“There have been a lot of smokejumpers involved in Agency work over the years and basically no one knows about it. I don't know why the Agency chose jumpers, but there had to have been a reason. I think it was because we could go anywhere, anytime, and do a tough, confusing job and then keep our mouths shut. I think smokejumpers have what it takes. They are not just fit and strong but have the ability to think independently and work towards a solution, no matter what the odds.

“The real story is about the type of people it takes to make a smokejumper because you can take that type of person and drop them anywhere.

“One thing that amazed me then, and now, is how the war in Laos was so much like fighting a forest fire. I think that was because smokejumpers set the pattern in the early 60s in Laos. They must have started running Op's like they'd run a fire out near Huslia with four village crews. Same damned thing, except I ran four battalions and over 1200 soldiers.

“If you ever do write about the Smokejumpers and the Agency, I think it would be a great contribution to the history of the smokejumpers and to that of the Vietnam era. Big project though, big.”

Since 2003, when I seriously began trying to identify the former jumpers who were involved in the above mentioned activities, I have been able to come up with the names of 96 individuals. Many of the names you see on “The List” have come directly from those involved. I came across other names when reading various books, newspaper articles, and stories published in *Smokejumper*.

It is my opinion that the relationship between the smokejumpers and the CIA began in 1951, when the Agency sent two paramilitary-types to Missoula to go through smokejumper training. Apparently, when the two trainees returned to Washington, D.C., the people in charge figured out that there was a group of people out West who were already trained in most of the skills they were looking for, and who were ready and willing to

take on any challenge. Hence, the CIA recruiting began in Missoula, and the rest is history.

I used the following criteria to determine who belonged on “The List”: Former smokejumpers who were Air America “kickers” or pilots and/or were field employees of the CIA in “*overseas*” positions between 1951 and 1975, when the “Secret War” ended. I’m sure that the list is pretty accurate, but it is always possible to miss someone and I am *always interested in any updates and corrections*. Six individuals have asked to be removed from the list below.

It is important to record history accurately. As seen in the April issue of *Smokejumper* and Operation Firefly, if it is not recorded accurately, what is written in later years is far from the fact and is created by writers far removed from the events.

The List

Allen, Max (MSO-48)Deceased 7/6/98
 Andersen, Roland “Andy” (GAC-52)
 Ball, Herman (MSO-50)Deceased 4/16/14
 Banta, Louis (CJ-51)
 Barber, James (GAC-60).....Deceased 4/4/02
 Barber, Michael (MSO-68)
 Barnowsky, Fred (MSO-42)Deceased 7/15/08
 Beasley, Ray (MYC-52)
 Bevan, David (MSO-55)Deceased 8/13/61
 A-America C-46 Crash
 Blake, Clifton (MSO-55)
 Bober, Mike (MSO-46).....Deceased 4/15/05
 Bowles, Bill (RDD-57)
 Brown, Lyle (GAC-54)Deceased 4/13/12
 Butler, Tom (MSO-61)
 Cahill, Jack (MSO-58)
 Casieri, Al (MSO-52).....Deceased 1/26/05
 Cochran, Art (MSO-42)Deceased 10/3/08
 Courtney, Don (MSO-56)
 Daniels, Jerry (MSO-58).....Deceased 4/28/82
 DeBruin, Gene (MSO-59)Shot down 9/5/63 MIA
 Dieffenbach, Charles (GAC-56) Pilot shot down 7/23/62, died while walking out
 Dobbins, Wallace (MSO-47).....Deceased 11/18/02
 Eubanks, Darrel (IDC-54)Deceased 8/13/61
 A-America C-46 Crash
 Evans, Charles (MSO-56) Deceased 1962
 Fite, Larry (MSO-60)
 Gossett, Lee (RDD-57)
 Graham, Richard (IDC-58)
 Granquist, Gary (RAC-65)..... Deceased
 Grasky, Jim (MSO-67)
 Greiner, Tom (MSO-55)
 Grenager, Lyle (MSO-48)

Grenlin, Les (MSO-46)Deceased 9/10/95
 Grover, Dayton (MSO-55)
 Hale, Glenn (MYC-57)Deceased 8/24/10
 Hamilton, Cliff (CJ-62)
 Harrison, Reed (MSO-60)Deceased 7/23/93
 Herald, Robert (MSO-55)
 Hessel, Ken (MYC-58)
 Hester, Billy (MSO-58).....Deceased 4/10/70
 Shot down Laos
 Houston, Everett (MYC-71)Deceased 6/18/08
 Johnson, Miles (MYC-53).....Deceased 10/26/97
 Johnson, Shep (MYC-56)
 Jukkala, Art (MSO-56)Deceased 7/12/99
 Kalbfus, Charles (MSO-45)
 Kapitz, Russ (MSO-58)
 Kirkley, Johnny (CJ-64)
 Kofford, Larry (MSO-63)
 Lehfeldt, Bruce (MSO-54)
 Lewis, John (MYC-53)Deceased 8/13/61
 A-America C-46 Crash
 Manley, John (CJ-62)
 Marlow, Glen (MSO-57)
 Mathews, Jack (MSO-48)Deceased 2/12/01
 Mellin, Dave (RAC-66).....Deceased 1/26/98
 Moloney, Bob (MYC-64)
 Moore, Larry (IDC-59)
 Moseley, Charley (CJ-62)Deceased 4/8/14
 Newton, Gideon (CJ-55)Deceased 7/17/63
 A-America C-46 Crash
 Nicol, Bob (MSO-52)
 Nyquest, Ted (MSO-54)
 Odom, Frank (MYC-63).....Deceased 4/5/77
 Shot down in Zambia.
 Oehlerich, Mike (MSO-60)
 Parker, Ray (MSO-53)
 Peterson, Richard (MYC-47).....Deceased 10/19/99
 Rainey, George (RAC-68)
 Reed, Barry (MSO-60)
 Roberts, Harry (MSO-53).....Deceased 5/17/10
 Saltsman, Joe (MSO-46)
 Samsel, Kirk (MSO-60)Deceased 9/9/94
 Schas, David (MYC-48)Deceased 7/14/88
 Schenck, Ray (MSO-56) Deceased 6/94
 Scott, Lavon (MYC-48)
 Scott, Toby (MYC-57)
 Seethaler, Karl (MSO-55)
 Smith, George (IDC-62)Deceased 8/16/06
 Smith, Kenn (IDC-55).....Deceased 8/22/97
 Smith, Glenn (NCSB-40)Deceased 5/28/88
 Spence, John (MYC-58)
 Stoleson, Ron (MSO-56)(OK)
 Stone, Dale (MYC-57)
 Swain, Charles (MSO-51) Deceased

Swift, Mick (CJ-56)Deceased 10/5/93
 Veitch, Jim (MSO-67)
 Wall, Jack (MSO-48)Deceased 9/28/10
 Ward, Hal (CJ-62)
 Watson, Bob (MSO-51)Deceased 12/6/12

Webb, Wayne (MSO-46)Deceased 11/7/99
 Weissenback, Ed (CJ-64)Deceased 12/27/71
 Shot Down Laos
 Whipple, Greg (MSO-59)
 Yeager, Charley (RAC-65)

Driscoll Smokejumper Oral History Project

John Driscoll (MSO-68) has completed a Smokejumper Oral History Project called “There I Was!”, 30 interviews with smokejumpers, mostly associated with Montana. Digital video discs were given to the University of Montana Library Archivist in November 2014. Information from John’s report that relates to the smokejumper/CIA articles in this issue is included.

John’s Notes:

Art Cochrane (MSO-42), was the senior jumper among the first cohort of ten or more recruited by the CIA in June 1951 to jump behind enemy lines and train nationalist parachute forces during the Korean War. One jumper watched those jumpers, one at a time, leave his barracks for an interview, return, say nothing, pack their bags and leave for points unknown.

Another person recalls, 17 years later, being one in a plane load of jumpers, en-route from Missoula to California, that touched down in Marana, AZ, to be briefed by a couple of guys in suits with “skinny ties,” and asked to come to work for the CIA during the wars in Southeast Asia.

There are interviews with three jumpers who worked for the CIA

Of the two Missoula jumpers, who would not speak frankly about their CIA experiences, one described in detail how he and other jumpers used a “Fulton Skyhook,” mounted on the nose of a B-17, to recover the body of a dead American scientist from a U.S. research station 85 miles from the North Pole.

The other described his long and painful recovery from a serious Border Patrol airplane crash, experienced while tracking immigrants illegally crossing the southern U.S. Border with Mexico.

The one who spoke frankly about his CIA experiences was recruited from the jump base at McCall, Idaho, in the early 1960s. He tells of his experiences supporting the Bay of Pigs Invasion by training Guatemalan and Cuban Airborne troops at a base on the Pacific side of Guatemala, being wounded at Long Cheng, rigging cargo for General Vang Pao’s “CIA Secret Army” of Hmong tribesmen in Laos, and rigging the yellow parachute that

dropped 300,000 rupees into the Tibet so that most of those funds could be used by the Dalai Lama’s entourage after it crossed into India, otherwise carrying only worthless Tibetan currency.

John’s Comments At The End Of His Notes:

“Though the unclassified CIA seems willing to assist in somehow telling the story of smokejumpers engaged in covert CIA operations, I became convinced that such an effort at this point will be premature, because a University of Montana graduate named **Garfield Thorsrud** (MSO-46), who grew up in Missoula and possesses a vast understanding of CIA covert operations involving smokejumpers, is the individual most likely to be consulted by the Agency before finally approving any revelations. Though Thorsrud’s own name appears in published works about CIA covert operations in Indonesia, China and the Arctic, the former Missoula smokejumper is adamant against broadly telling the smokejumper story in some fashion. Though all of the covert operations of which I am aware have long since been declassified and published openly, my sense is that Thorsrud feels that telling the broader smokejumper story will put other operations, or aspects of operations that are either current or historical, at risk.”

Gar died November 23, 2014, and with him went a lot of important and interesting history that probably will never be told. (Ed.)

John was kind enough to send printed copies of his interviews. The following are excerpts from John Driscoll’s work:

Notes From February 8, 2014,

Interview With Art Morrison (MSO-68):

He said he was flying in a DC-3 loaded with jumpers (enroute to California) when it touched down, and some guys with suits and skinny ties came into the room at Marana and tried to recruit cargo kickers, \$50K per year tax-free. Some decided to do it. He knows for sure that **Jim Veitch** (MSO-67) worked for the CIA. Veitch was “hard core.” Ate “C” rations in a corner by himself.

Notes From November 6, 2014,

Interview With Joe McDonald (WYS-51):

Because he had gotten to Nine Mile late, he ended up in the barracks with the old men. Joe remembers that the CIA would come to Nine Mile and call a man down for an interview. If they agreed to go with the Agency, they'd come back to the barracks and mum was the word. They wouldn't say anything. "I really wanted to go in the worst way but they were looking for college graduates. I was never called." They took Art Cochran. **Gar Thorsrud** (MSO-46) was one of them and later, **Wally Dobbins** (MSO-47) and **Jimmy Barber** (GAC-60).

Notes From January 1, 2015,

Interview With Lyle Grenager (MSO-48):

The day he got recruited, the CIA man said, "We want you because you're self-reliant and we won't have to babysit you like we do some of those Ivy Leaguers. Do you want the job?" "Well, what will I be doing?" "Can't tell you. Do you want the job?"

He went to Washington, D.C., then to Taiwan for a couple of months, then back to Washington. "I don't know what that was all about. Then we went back to Taiwan and stayed."

Smokejumper **Jack Wall** (MSO-48) was Lyle's friend, very talented. Completely stripped down a DC-3 to fill it with propaganda leaflets to be flown clear across China, then rode along the whole distance as kicker, lying on top of them.

Lyle would go over to Quemoy (island, one mile off mainland coast) with a CIA radioman and monitor mainland radio traffic. He used the time to help keep the 10,000 nationalist troops on Quemoy busy (recreation, etc).

Back on Taiwan he bunked with Col Rucker in the Taipei Guest House and worked during the day in "the huge arsenal the CIA had south of town." The arsenal had thousands of all kinds of weapons and ammunition, especially German from WWII, to equip forces once they gained a foothold on the mainland. "I did that after expressing an interest in guns (nothing more)." At the end of the Taiwan assignment he went to work at the CIA arsenal in Washington, D.C. for a couple more years.

"When I got home, my draft board wanted to draft me. CIA said it didn't have the influence to stop it, but could get him out of the service." After basic a General let him out saying, "You must have some important friends." That's when he decided to spend a few more years working for the CIA at the arsenal.

He said Art Cochran was running the Nine Mile Base when his contingent (unknown number) was recruited and knew Cochran also went with the CIA, but seemed "unattached" to "Gar's Group."

Notes From October 28, 2014,

Interview With Bob Nicol (MSO-52):

Bob went to work with Intermountain Aviation in Marana, Arizona, in January of 1962 as a pilot.

He was on Project Coldfeet (*Smokejumper* Jan. 2010) involving picking up the body ("Old George" *Smokejumper* Jan. 2011) of a scientist from an ice station in the arctic. Jerry Daniels and Toby Scott were also on that mission. One of the guys on the ground later said, "It was like God came down from heaven. There was old George sitting there on the ground, and he just slowly disappears into the clouds. The shadow of an airplane comes over, and these two parachutes, carrying whisky, come floating down."

In 1968 he more or less became Chief Pilot for the Twin Otters. He stayed with Intermountain until they sold out in 1975. He then went back to the Forest Service and retired in 1990.

Smokejumpers Mentioned In Other Books About CIA Operations:

Covert Ops/The CIA's Secret War In Laos by James E. Parker

Jerry Daniels, Shep Johnson and Frank Odom

The Book Of Honor by Ted Gup

Gar Thorsrud, Miles and Shep Johnson and Jack Wall

The Ravens by Christopher Robbins

Shep Johnson, Frank Odom and Jerry Daniels

Honor Denied by Allen Cates

Ed Weissenback, Bobby Herald and Billy Hester

A Code to Keep by Ernest Brace

Gene DeBruin

Hog's Exit by Gayle Morrison

Lee Gossett, Glenn Hale, Ken Hessel, Shep Johnson, Bob Nicol, Mike Oehlerich, Barry Reed, Toby Scott, T.J. Thompson, GarThorsrud, Jack Wall, Lyle Grenager, Herman Ball, Wally Dobbins, Les Grenlin, Jonathan "LaVon" Scott, Glenn Smith, JackCahill, Jack Mathews, Miles Johnson, Richard Peterson, Lyle Brown, Fred Barnowsky, Billy Hester, John Lewis and Darrell Eubanks.

Air America by Christopher Robbins

Gar Thorsrud

Shooting At The Moon by Roger Warner

Jerry Daniels

Tragic Mountains by Jane Hamilton-Merritt

Jerry Daniels and Toby Scott

Sky Is Falling by Gayle Morrison

Jerry Daniels

Great Falls Tribune 6/2/14

Ray Beasley and Shep Johnson

CIA Notes William M. Leary Univ. of Texas at Dallas Archive,

Missions To Tibet by Dr. Joe F. Leeker, and *Letters from Miles Johnson to William Leary*

Roland Anderson, Fred Barnowsky, William Demmons, Darrell Eubanks, Miles Johnson, Shep John-

son, Art Jukkala, John Lewis, Richard Peterson, Ray Schenck and Ray Beasley

Thomas Fosmire interview with Wm. Leary 12/28/92
Gar Thorsrud.

Southeast Asia 1967-71 And Roary Murchison

by Joe Lord (Missoula '56)

This is no shit. There I was ... in Vientiane, Laos, January 1971, wrapping up a four-year commitment to the United Nations Economic Commission for Asia and the Far East (ECAFE). Vientiane, supposedly the end of the psychedelic trail, home of the Lane Xang Hotel, the White Rose – and 1971, the height of the Vietnam War (if there were ever any heights).

I was a civil engineer on loan to ECAFE from the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation and part of a group of scientists, geologists and engineers studying the irrigation suitability of the Mekong River. We were also investigating three rivers in Northeast Thailand: the Nam Mun, Nam Chi and the Nam Yang.

While spending most of my time upcountry, I lived for these four years in Bangkok with my wife, Judy, and our three children (two were born in Bangkok).

What is significant about being and working in Vientiane at this time was that Vientiane was the headquarters for Air America and the CIA (if there was a difference between these organizations). I won't start to tell you how many smokejumpers have a well-recorded history of association with one or both of these organizations, primarily because I don't know.

But I can tell you my group had offices in Air America and flew on a number of their aircraft. And not to brag, but I believe that during my stays upcountry and travels, there weren't many bars that I missed. I would also note that I had PX privileges and officer club passes at the three main U.S. air bases in northeast Thailand.

In the four years that I knocked around in Thailand, Laos and Cambodia, I did not run into one smokejumper. I know that **J.B. Stone** (MSO-56) was doing his historic things out of one of those bases and made efforts to hook up with him ... which never happened.

When I read the *Smokejumper* quarterly magazine and see all these wild tales of Air America and CIA

activities in Laos, I wonder where in the hell I was. This all has become even more frustrating as I go on these smokejumper summer projects and run into old jumpers who were there when I was, and did and saw and ate the things that I did.

For example, **Tom Butler** (MSO-61). Tom married a Laotian lady and now speaks better Lao (northeastern Thai) than I do. And **Shep Johnson** (MYC-56) – what a deal he had, doing all that wild, crazy stuff in Asia and then going back and jumping in our mountain West.

I really enjoy reading all the many stories about the secret war in Laos and the kickers (ex-smokejumpers) who fought in this 13-year war that three presidents denied ever happened, even though I seemed to have missed out.

I did have one smokejumper reunion of sorts while in Thailand. My wife's roommate in college dated a smokejumper, **Roary Murchison** (RDD-57). He visited us in Washington, D.C., while we were going through orientation in 1967 for assignment overseas. It was shortly after he graduated from medical school at Ohio State University.

He also visited us a couple of times in Bangkok on R&R. This guy was a special person, besides being a smokejumper.

When I saw him last, he was a captain or major in the U.S. Army Special Forces and a medical doctor operating on an A-Team in Vietnam. I loved to hear his stories and the wild things he did or was planning to do. I don't think it would be wise to relate some of them here, but the best was what he was going to do when rotating back to the States.

He was planning to buy one of those little French cabs that run around in Saigon and put some guns in the gas tank and ship it back to the states. He promised me an AK-47!

Roary, as they say, is now "off the jump list," so they can't do anything about what he did. Roary was a

unique guy who tended to things in a special way.

His obituary was published Sept. 5, 1990. He died from leukemia; I had expected him to be shot or hanged.

Dr. Roary A. Murchison Jr., an emergency room physician who helped found three occupational medical clinics, has died at his Woodland Hills home. He was 52. A native of Alabama, Murchison graduated from Ohio State University College of Medicine in the early 1960s and later served in the U.S. Army Special Forces during the Vietnam War. He worked as an emergency room physician in Chino before coming to Woodland Hills in 1980.

What got me motivated to write this missive was I went on the Smokejumper Website to look up Roary's

obituary. When I couldn't find it, I looked up his brother, **Phil Murchison** (CJ-58), on the Jump List. Using Phil, and not his real name, John P. Murchison, he didn't show up either, so I jumped to the conclusion that they, Roary and Phil, had fallen through the cracks.

Wrong – they are there, as they should be. We just need to write an obituary for Roary, which I intend to see done.

The last year I jumped was in New Mexico in 1968 with **Roland Andersen** (MSO-52), Shep Johnson, Art Jukkala (MSO-56) **Darrel Eubanks** (IDC-54), and a number of others who made up a pretty special crew. I look back on the three years that I was smokejumper as the most special time of my 79 years, and I want everybody who shared this same experience to be notably recorded.

Six-five-four ... biteem dice.

Spotting: An Art?

by Doug Houston (Redmond '73)

Recently I have been traveling to both the North Cascades and Redmond reunions. It has given me a lot of time to think about jumping and the many experiences that I had over 28 years. Spotting smokejumpers was one that I did for 25 years – mostly well, I think.

Spotting has a lot of responsibility with it. You are trying to give jumpers their best opportunity to toggle close to the fire and still make it to the ground, safely. It is also a job where you can hit or slap people and they can't hit you back. They fall or jump out of the airplane and they are gone. What a deal.

I have been accused of putting people out in s---t holes. However, I judged jump spots – relating them to whether I would jump them or not – and I would jump pretty much anything, so out they'd go. Wind was a definite factor in all of these decisions.



Doug Houston (NSA files)

We started out with the 10-foot, crepe-paper streamers wrapped around a 10-inch piece of No. 9 wire taped on to the end, so it fell about the same rate as a jumper would. Then we went to the 20-foot streamer with sand taped to the end of the crepe paper. This was much safer than the possibility of No. 9 wire breaking through the material and free-falling to Earth at Mach 1.

The 20-footers were easier to see in the air, also. So, out the door they would go with all eyes glued to the windows to see what they were doing. Sometimes the decisions to jump weren't bullet-proof; thus an art – or a repetitive, trained procedure?

Examples of those decisions were a jump on the Ochoco National Forest, where I kicked **Jim Reeve** (RAC-82) and **Mike Lysne** (RAC-82) out on a small fire. I never saw either of their parachutes in the air. Out they went; I pulled in the D-bags and looked for parachutes, but never saw them. Nasty down air had driven them quite rapidly to the ground.

The good thing was that they both lived and were able to scratch a little line with sticks until we were back with their cargo in an hour or so. The weather had driven us out and back to the airport. Once it passed, we deliv-

ered just like good spotters do.

Another example was a jump on the Malheur National Forest where we had a pretty steady wind of 20 mph or so. Steady wind, and the jump spot was large enough for all eight to get into it. I do remember **Bill Bickers** (NCSB-72) asking me how much wind there was, as he was hooked up and ready to jump.

My response was: "Don't ask; you don't want to know." That was a confidence builder and out the door he went. I remember counting 23 seconds past the jump spot before kicking the streamers, then jumpers out. It was windy, but steady – thus art?

At times I would ask, "Where do you want to go?" There was

only one time that the reply was, "I want to go home" ... funny guy. Out the door he went ... and lived. The kind of response that you liked was, "Just put me on the fire," which meant that the whole world was a jump spot and all you had to do was just get 'em close. My kind of jumper.

I know there are a lot more stories out there – some good, some really not believable. My wife even accused me of mis-spotting her ... on a square. I thought that was what all that additional forward speed was about – you could drive upwind, if needed, etc.

We put jumpers on 167 fires out of Redmond in 1977. One day I spotted jumpers on 15

fires. Not sure if that is a record, but there were two-jumper fires everywhere, without a lot of wind. So on every pass with the DC-3, it was spotters, jumpers, cargo – then fly to the next fire. We would get rid of that load and then head back for another. Great day and really honed by artwork – spotting.

Art? Not too sure, but you do have to be convincing, part salesman and part motivator, when the spots don't look all that inviting.

So, for all of you who have experienced this artful work with not-so-great results, I do apologize. I know there are a few of you out there.

Fire Call! Bringing in the Cheese

by Major L. Boddicker (Missoula '63)

Fire call! The Trimotor Ford sputtered to life under the expert control of pilot Frank Borgeson. **Ted Nyquest** (MSO-54), our foreman, called the roster: "Boddicker, Daniels, Ferguson, Grover, Jacobson, Laney, Peiffer, and Schmidt. Load up," he barked.

Grangeville, Idaho, July 19, 1964, a lightning strike had fired up a snag on the Rhoda Creek, Moose Creek District. We clambered aboard the Ford, then shuffled around to get into a comfortable squat (until we jumped), loaded down in our bulky suits and chutes.

The Trimotor Ford was an experience in itself. Oats, spilled from burlap bags hauled to Moose Creek for pack-out mules, had sprouted where rainwater had gathered under the floor slats. We stepped on green oat shoots as we entered the plane. Engine oil streamed down the cowls of both wing engines. The Ford looked like someone recycled a cow shed and old tractor to make a plane out of it. The Ford was the perfect plane for Grangeville jumping.

I loved Grangeville, small, quiet, clean, organized, and ready. **Ted Nyquest** (foreman), **Dave Bennett** (MSO-61), and **Dayton Grover** (MSO-55) (squad leaders) had us ready to fight fires. The mood was



Dayton Grover squadleader at Grangeville (Courtesy M. Boddicker)

excited confidence as we lifted off for the short ride northeast toward Rhoda Creek.

The fire was on the slope of a cirque, a hollowed-out valley carved by glaciers eons ago. The valley was open and large so the Ford could maneuver rather comfortably to set us up on a nice jump spot.

I remember the Ford dropping rather low as Frank piloted the plane until it felt like the tree tops could scratch the belly of the plane. The Ford circled and climbed to

about 1000 feet when Ted Nyquest spotted us, and out we went. All eight of us landed safely and signaled to

Nyquest that we were okay.

Dayton Grover was the squad leader. After we reported we were all okay and collected at the jump spot, Grover assigned me to be the camp tender. That was a job I did not mind, so I got it quite often.

The rest of the crew broke out their gear and headed off to fight the fire. I collected and organized the gear, started a hunkering fire, set up a comfortable toilet, and dug and lined sleeping spots with bear grass and spruce bows.

A toilet was made from an empty 5-gallon water box and plastic jug so the tender butts of my jumper buddies would not be exposed to rough tree bark or mosquitoes and deer flies. Those types of thoughtful efforts are what landed me the camp tender job rather than scratching lines in the dirt and ashes.

In 1964, the Forest Service rations were supplemented quite nicely with food we bought and stuck into our letdown rope pockets or fire packs. Supplemented with trout, grouse, Spam, hams, real canned butter, etc., we ate quite well.

The Grangeville crew of 1964 may have been typical, but they impressed me as being particularly smart, quick, *go-for-it* guys.

The Rhoda Creek Fire was about an acre in size in green grass and light fuels. According to Dayton Grover, the fire was in a tall snag. Burning chunks of wood popped out the top and fed the small fire. Dayton and his partner used a crosscut to drop it. As he was cutting, Dayton sliced his finger badly on the saw. We wrapped it up as well as we could with the small first-aid kit issued to us, but it needed stitches. Dayton crippled along with the hand wound until we got back to Grangeville, no complaints.

The fire was quickly lined and put out by the crew. The fire was cold enough that there was no need to man it all night. So the crew came back to camp that night.

Whether at fires, at the loft, on long packouts, or sitting around hunkering fires at night, the conversations were entertaining and generally attitude-morale boosting. The Rhoda Creek Fire was no different.

During the early morning, most of the crew checked back on the fire, while two of us cleaned up camp and packed gear for the long packout to Moose Creek Ranger Station.

In 1964, we rarely got a chopper ride out. We packed up 80+ pounds of gear, backed into the old WWII pack frames with a lurching grunt, climbed to our feet and headed out. The Rhoda Creek packout was long—12+ miles, but rather gradually downhill.

There was usually some kind of conversation going on among the jumpers as we trudged along. The jump,

the fire, the latest behavior outrage at a local bar, sex, and beer were the usual topics.

This packout was no different. As we trudged along, packs squeaking and muscles aching, something amazing happened. I don't remember exactly, but I think **Larry (Fergie) Ferguson** (MSO-62) spotted a full-sealed quart of Jack Daniels Black Label whiskey laying in the trail. It likely dropped out of an elk hunter's pannier the previous fall. Reader, you cannot imagine the joy several of us Christian drinkers had at the reaffirmation that God really did appreciate smoke-jumpers at that moment. We had about 6 miles of trail to hike before we arrived at Moose Creek Ranger Station. It was about 3 pm, and we were tired.

Some jumpers drink whiskey, some don't. Some are religious, some aren't. Some appreciated Forest Service manual regulations, some interpreted them as mere guidelines to violate whenever possible. I never was much of a follower of government regulations when human frailties were possible.

Fergie was positively elated at finding the uncapped whiskey, as were Digger, Dayton, several others, and I. So, off came the cap and the jug was passed around. Maybe half of us swallowed a tug on it. Oh, so smooth and good. It warmed the hurt right out of my legs. A tug or two was enough for most of the guys, leaving the surplus to three of us. To make it last, I dumped my canteen and filled it about three-quarters full of Rhoda Creek water, cold and clean snow melt, then I poured in about a third of the remaining whiskey.

After one-half mile or so, Digger, always the entertainment director, began singing his lyrics and arrangements of gospel songs like, *Bringing in the Cheese*, *What a Friend We Have in Jesus*, and *Little Girls Have Blank Blank*, but I like Oreos.

We were belting out these melodies as we marched into Moose Creek Ranger Station about 6:30 pm. The Moose Creek crew was ready for us and came out to meet us. The cook crew at Moose Creek was terrific if my memory serves me. It was announced that we had about 30 minutes to relax before dinner was served.

I was given, upon request, a glass full of ice cubes. I poured the remaining water and Jack Daniels into the glass and sat heavily down into a lawn chair with spring-type legs, to rest my weary body.

The smiling face of Dayton Grover, who might have shared the Jack Daniels to reduce his finger pain, is on the mirror of my memory as I remember leaning back in the chair and slowly, gradually descending to the ground, the chair spring-type legs collapsing.

Of course, the immediate question comes to mind: Did Boddicker spill the Jack Daniels? Not a drop of it was wasted. My smokejumper-trained land-

ing instincts came to the fore, and the glass remained at the precise angle needed to protect this gift from God. I finished the Jack Daniels, treasuring every drop before dinner.

The next morning, the Ford Trimotor picked us up for the ride back to Grangeville.

Why would Dayton Grover remember this miniscule event of history so vividly that he reminds me of it each time we get together? Dayton has a great memory for really goofy jumper trivia.

This article written at his bequest is dedicated to my great friend and squad leader boss, Dayton Grover.

BLAST FROM THE PAST

by **Chuck Sheley** (Cave Junction '59)
Chico Record June 30, 1945

Chico Army Airfield Ready To Aid Forestry Service

THE PLANS THE Army has set for cooperating with the US Forestry Service in combating forest fires were announced today.

Chico Army Air Field (CAAF) will be the base of operations in this area. A unit of engineer troops, a detachment of liaison pilots of planes and several representatives of the Forestry Service are now on the base. In addition, a unit of paratroopers, along with their transport planes, will be assigned here soon.

The troops at Chico will be used as a reserve for manpower in fighting the fires. The paratroopers will be dropped into areas which cannot be reached any other way. The ground troops will be brought in by truck.

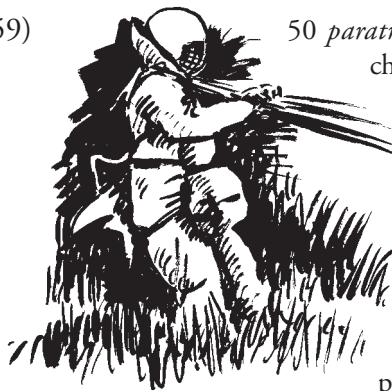
All the liaison pilots and the ground troops are men who have seen overseas service and now are receiving special training in combating forest fires.

Chico Record August 9, 1945

Three Paratroopers Injured In Drops Into Fire Areas

Three Chico Army Airfield (CAAF) paratroopers, injured Tuesday in jumps into the inaccessible Ripple Creek country in north Trinity country in newest attacks of local airborne troops on forest fires raging in that area, were packed out after receiving aid from a paratrooper medical officer and flown here yesterday for medical treatment.

The three were members of units totaling more than



50 paratroopers from CAAF who have been parachuted into almost inaccessible areas in Trinity country the past two days to fight raging forest fires set by electrical storms.

Reports that the paratrooper had dropped in the flames in the Ripple Creek Fire were not borne out yesterday when the men were packed out of the rugged regions and transported to Redding by ambulance. At Redding they were placed aboard a C-47 and flown to CAAF where two were hospitalized and the third was transferred to Hamilton Field when it was found he suffered a broken leg.

The injured men were given quick medical aid when their plight was walkie-talkied to air patrol planes. Lt. **Melvin Farris**, paratrooper medical officer, was quickly dispatched and dropped into the rugged region to give the men all possible medical aid and direct their removal.

Chico Record August 9, 1945

CAAF Paratroop Fire Fighters Not Badly Hurt

Three Chico Army Air Field paratroopers injured in forest fire jumps in north Trinity country and rescued by fellow paratroopers, were not seriously hurt surgeons at CAAF station hospital said yesterday.

The most seriously injured was Pfc. **Woodroe Spiller**, compound fracture of small bone in ankle. Pvt. **Ernest Pritchard**, mild pelvic bone injury and Sgt. **Thomas D. Hillman**, severe bruises. Spiller was flown to Hamilton Field for further treatment.

The men were flown to CAAF Wednesday in a C-47 after they had been brought out of the rugged area on stretchers by men under direction of Lt. **Melvin Farris**, paratrooper medical officer, and Pvt. **Clarence Shackelford**, who 'chuted in to aid the injured men.

The Klamath Fires of 2014

by Murry Taylor (Redding '65)

This last summer was a hell of a deal for the Klamath N.F. and the people that live in it or close to it. Around 230,000 acres burned, most of that in the Happy Camp Complex, the Beaver, and White's Gulch Fires. From early August until mid-September we lived under smokey skies, imperiled by the possibility of being burned out. One friend's 80-acre place near Oak Knoll burned to a moonscape in the Beaver Fire. I was on Duzel Rock, a local Cal Fire lookout, putting in 55 days up there. I was on the radio listening every day, keeping maps and notes. Even so, I can't really write accurately about all the fires, just too much to cover. But I can tell the story of the Log Fire, the one just 3-4 miles from my 40 acres in Quartz Valley. It started on July 30 during a typical afternoon lightning storm. There are conflicting stories about whether it was manned the first night. The Forest Service says it was, but I think what they meant was that a crew was somewhere up on a ridge near it. I don't think they took direct action. It was steep, heavy fuels, near the top of the ridge.

The following morning 10 Alaska and Boise BLM smokejumpers jumped it out of Redding. They had come the night before from Utah where they had been standing by. They jumped—not on the fire itself—but down in the valley, then were driven up and hiked the rest of the way in. They told me later that with the terrain as rough as it was, no safety zones at all, and the condition and size (five acres) of the fire, they thought that was a good call. I know these guys from the 15 to 20 years ago when they were green-behind-the-ears rookies, and I know how good they are fighting fire, so I trust their judgment on that.

Later that afternoon the wind came up and the fire went to 15 acres, and they abandoned the ridge and backed off. This fire was near a state protection zone, a mutual aid area between the FS and Cal Fire. While the FS was calling for a Class III team, Cal Fire went up there and made their initial commitment, first opening up old logging roads, then hiking crews in, building some direct line, some indirect. The jumpers became Dozer Bosses. The going was tough and slow and dangerous. The FS was reluctant. Cal Fire was not. Five days passed. The fire continued to grow, and by then was about 1500 acres. That's when they called for an advisory evacuation of the south end of Quartz Valley where I have my home. I had to leave the lookout.

That same day a Type 1 Team showed up and was conducting a fire meeting with locals at Quartz Valley School. I got there a little late. **Davis Perkins** (NCSB-72) had come to help and saved me a seat.

IC Jerry McGowan got on stage and made a startling statement, saying that if they failed to hold the fire where it was they would back off, come down the valley floor, build contingency dozer lines all along the edge of the mountain, then fight the fire there. When he left the stage I jumped up, followed him out, and got into it with him. I couldn't understand why he would pull back so far when the crews had already contained so much, a little each day, some each night. Cal Fire was gaining on this fire. He explained, in a not very convincing fashion, that his was a good strategy. Hell, it was only his first day there, and I don't know what he knew, but I wasn't impressed at all. It just flat didn't make sense to give up on five days good effort, drop back three miles, and give up 2000 feet of elevation to build a dozer line that—if a big wind came up—no one could hold anyway. In the meantime everyone living there would be faced with being burned out. We didn't agree on much, but I had to leave, go home, and prepare to evacuate.

My son, Eric, had also come to help. Eric, Davis and I sat down and made a plan. Early the next morning Davis and I took the Rhino four-wheeler, picked up a neighbor, and went to recon a couple old roads along the base of the mountains—good places to go to put dozer line, if that became necessary. That's when I ran into **Derek Patton** (RAC-00) of the Alaska smokejumpers. We showed him the roads, a D-6 arrived. We did some flagging and chain sawing, worked with him and the Cat until noon, then went home to evacuate some things. That afternoon I went into the fire camp in Etna and spoke again, both to McGowan and Keith Callison (Cal Fire), who were then functioning as Unified Command. I pleaded with McGowan, explaining what Cal Fire had done, and urging him to leave the current command (Cal Fire) structure in place. Turned out, that's what they did. It wasn't just me, though. A local Cal Fire Battalion Commander had been to fire camp and gotten into a yelling match trying to convince them of the same thing. Three days later, with some good cat work and retardant drops the fire was contained at 3500 acres—its final acreage.

The point of this story is that it serves as a good

example. Like most of the other fires, the Log Fire was in steep, rough country with lots of fuels, reasons the FS often gives for not doing more aggressive IA. Cal Fire proved you could do it. Meanwhile a nearby FS fire went to 45,000 acres, another to 55,000, and the other Happy Camp Complex to over 100,000.

The night after I met Derek Patton and his Cat, we had 10 hungry smokejumpers for a dinner of Mexican food. We drank beer and told stories. My son Eric loved it. Next morning he said, “Dad, now I see why you love these guys. They were dirty, they were tired, they smelled of smoke, and yet they were happy, laughing, telling stories, and just loving it all.”

The passion for good firefighting is developed in successful Initial Attack (IA). It comes from those tough times when you have to work your ass off, climb steep mountains, dig line, fall trees, eat smoke, push yourself to a point of misery, but keep going and going until you round the head and contain your fire. And when you walk off that mountain, you walk off with something no one can take from you. It’s what makes confident and strong firefighters. This is not to take away from all the admirable accomplishments in extended attack. Much of the same is gained there. But catching fires in their initial stage is where good firemen are born and most of the satisfaction lies.

Most of us worked our whole lives believing in strong, sound, aggressive IA. Our local Cal Fire guys still do a lot of that. Each summer the story is the same. A lightning storm comes through, fires start, Cal Fire picks up 30 to 40 in the next two days or so. The Forest Service also catches some. But then the smoke begins to roll out of the national forest, fires go big, huge camps are built, millions of dollars wasted. In the last five years the Klamath N.F. has burned 25 percent of the forest. In their After Action Meetings, they did admit that something had to change. There are a lot of good folks serious about fixing this problem. By the end of these big fires, night shifts were started, crews were going direct, operations were more like the old days.

In summary, some good things are happening. An extraordinary effort by a couple retired FMO’s, a retired District Ranger, and a Co. Supervisor down in Weaverville have gotten the attention of their local congressman and the Washington Office. They prepared a report: Fire History and Research, Big Bar Ranger District, Northwestern Trinity County, California: Critique of Fire Suppression Practices—a 65 page report detailing the failed policies applied during the season of 2008. Dave Rhodes had a lot to do with that. Now they have a group of old firedogs that meet with incoming teams and—after clearing things with

the Shasta-Trinity Supervisor’s Office—define the goals for the team. I was on the lookout when the Coffee Creek Fire took off and, from the looks of the smoke column, figured it was gone. It wasn’t! The old dogs met the team and told them to “Put it out!” Three or four days later, they had a line around an 1800-acre fire and held it.

The problem with the Forest Service appears to be in its leadership, its line of authority, the District Ranger, Forest Supervisor, Regional Forester, and the Washington Office. Most all the crews want to fight fire more aggressively. Many have complained to me about being held back, being brought into camp every night, being moved from one assignment to another, not reaching their work area until late in the morning, and having to leave early to get back to a helispot so they can be returned to camp, etc. Most all would prefer to coyote camp in the woods and get more work done. It’s my sense, however, that these complaints don’t travel very far up the chain of command. There appears to be a big disconnect between those in the field and those making policy. This seems especially true on big fires when Incident Teams take over. Safety is emphasized to the point of the ridiculous. In the long run, the fires get bigger, expose more people to more hazards, and more get hurt or killed.

We have an opportunity to also form a group of old firedogs on the Klamath. We are in touch with the Shasta-Trinity group. The work has begun. This is a complicated issue but, with time, I believe the Forest Service will turn around and get back to more successful suppression. If you want to email me about it, please do. My email: murrytay@sisqtel.net



How’s This for Steep Jump Country?

Three Prong Fire, Winthrop District, August 8, 1966. L-R: Mike Fort (NCSB-61), Bill Moody (NCSB-57), Dave Taylor (NCSB-64)

Ram-Air Program Combines Best Of The Old, New

by Bobby Sutton (Missoula '91)

At 500 feet above ground level you are committed. My challenge: to hit a 10-foot-by-10-foot pink target the training officer had laid out. This proficiency jump was at a place called Witts sidehill.

Witts side-hill is a steep but large jump spot with lots of room to run out. It has tall Douglas fir on the top and sides with a thick patch of aspen at the bottom. **Cindy Champion** (MSO-99) had also set out the main target, an old orange cargo chute that everyone else on the load set as the bull's eye.

The first three jumped rounds. They got right in there. The first round FS-14 pilot landed about 100 feet from the orange, and the next stick of two rounds split the difference. One "hammered" a bit closer and the other out about 200 yards.

Then it was our turn. As the streamers flew we discussed our flight plan and set-up point for the two sticks of two ram-air jumpers. **Pete Lannan** (WYS-07) was our new West Yellowstone base manager. He would jump with **Jason Gibb** (GAC-03) and planned a left-hand pattern. Pete told Jason he figured to take a conservative approach and probably go long.

Eric Held (WYS-06) and I planned for a right-hand pattern, but then Eric decided to follow Jason with the left. I was the last person on the load. I decided to stay with the right-hand pattern and committed to the challenge of nailing the pink X.

It was placed about 75 feet from a wall of trees with three tall snags. It would be a challenging approach. I was jumping the newest type of parachute approved for the Forest Service ram-air program. After five years of jumping the CR-360 (*Square built by Performance Designs-Ed.*) canopy, I can't help but thrive at the challenge of pushing square parachute accuracy. I want to be the most accurate jumper I can be.

At 500 feet above ground level, I saw all the other jumpers had landed as planned. I had to focus on target and find the sink. I went from sink to stall, then back to sink, and found the perfect sight picture.

I was on target. Never mind the three large snags that were also in my sight picture. I was flying a CR-360 and in full control. I checked my forward penetration into a very slight wind. I had lots.

Then I focused back into the sight picture and locked

on the pink X. My challenge was almost complete. I was at 40 feet and sinking directly to target. I only needed to finish off with the perfect flare. At 15 feet, I flared.

What the --? I was still flying. With my acute concentration on the pink target, I lost reference to the slope contour and failed to point directly sidehill. Still, I landed softly 40 feet from the pink X.

I was disappointed for not meeting my objective. Still, the CR-360 parachute performed exceptionally well. The canopy accomplished everything I directed it to do. I am so happy to be part of the Forest Service ram-air program – to be able to both challenge myself as a parachute handler and to continually share my lessons learned with other smokejumpers.

In contrast, let me reflect to 1991 when I arrived in Missoula a few days early for rookie training. I met **Billy Martin** (LGD-79) my first evening at the dorms. We sat down and visited and he asked about my background. Billy was so happy to tell me that he was a Grangeville jumper in Missoula doing some ram-air training.

After a few more information exchanges, he asked if I wanted to ride with him into town and run some errands. I jumped at the chance to get an orientation of the big city of Missoula. Then it was on to view the city and return to the dorms by early evening. As we departed for our rooms, Billy asked if I wanted to watch the training jump the next morning. I said "yes" and he directed me to the "Field of Shame" for the morning jump.

I returned from the store in the morning a bit late and was surprised to see the Twin Otter circling above the base. I rushed to the jump spot, hoping to make it there for the jump. Just as I arrived, I saw a jumper exit the aircraft. Wow! He was falling, falling and falling.

Then, just above the ground I saw a parachute. I knew nothing about parachute jumping, but it looks odd. Then I saw people rush to the location of the jumper. That is when I knew something went wrong. I went directly back to the dorms to find out a couple of hours later that Billy had been killed.

Ken Heare (MSO-79) knocked on my door early that evening and asked me to accompany him to a gathering with many of the jumpers who had been there that day. I was in rookie training two days later.

I gathered information on the ram-air program over

the next several years. I learned about how it started and evolved, how it had ended and how it affected the organization and personnel. There has been a lot of animosity toward the ram-air program since its inception.

The Region 1 smokejumper program and the BLM operate today within an agreement (for the seventh year) that permits the West Yellowstone, Missoula and Grangeville jump bases to train and maintain a ram-air program. I am proud to be working for an outfit that learns and adapts. The smokejumpers still embody the traditional values of the old Forest Service conservation

learning organization that could quickly adapt and utilize new technologies to effectively improve upon time-tested operational techniques.

Combining the best of the old with the best of the new is a quality inherent to a learning organization. It is a quality of the smokejumpers. The ram-air program is "Breaking New Ground"¹ to provide our jumpers with a more versatile and effective tool in getting firefighters to the fire as fast and as safely as possible.

Breaking New Ground by Gifford Pinchot. Copyright 1947 by the Estate of Gifford Pinchot.

Higgins Ridge Fire Was Memorable Due To Size, Intensity

by Jeff R. Davis (Missoula '57)

Smokejumper magazine published several articles about the 1961 Higgins Ridge Fire on the Nez Perce National Forest in Idaho. I was involved with it from the start.

I received the fire call at my base, the Aerial Fire Depot in Missoula, at 4:45 a.m., July 27. I was a new squad leader that summer. I took off at 5:15 a.m. in "67 Victor," the DC-2 from Johnson's Flying Service, with six jumpers aboard, destined for three two-man fires on the Nez Perce.

I dropped on the first two-man-easily enough, and the second fire proved to be a "no-show." I flew next to the third fire on my request form, the Higgins Ridge Fire. Higgins Ridge lay sharply upslope to the south of the mighty Salmon River, just above a sharp crook in the river named Elbow Bend.

It was burning in a saddle on top of a steep ridge, and it was burning hot. The fire was in a single snag, with some of it beginning to spread to the ground below.

The intensity of the blaze disturbed me, and I dropped the four remaining jumpers, including the

two who hadn't jumped on the dry run. I also ordered a load of retardant from Missoula. The only "slop-wagon" we had in those days was a TBM and it carried 500 gallons.

I watched my four jumpers attacking the fire, as I finished the cargo drop, and I was reasonably certain they'd control it.

My attention was soon drawn to the fires burning on other parts of the Nez Perce and on every other forest in the Northwest. I was to make 86 flights that summer, dropping men and supplies to every corner of Montana, Idaho, Washington and California; I made 10 jumps myself. The 1961 season was a smokejumper's dream.

My four jumpers on the Higgins Ridge Fire controlled it quickly, and signed the fire over to four district firefighters so they could be released to return to Missoula for new fire requests. The fire jumped its lines and became wildly out of control.

It grew to become a crowning monster that required daily airdrops of jumpers and cargo for the next month. I dropped cargo

there Aug. 5, Aug. 9, Aug. 10 and Aug. 13 and was only one kicker of dozens who flew countless runs on the blaze.

A crew of 20 jumpers from Missoula was trapped at one time on the fire. Through the heroic efforts of **Rod Snider** (NCSB-51), a Johnson's chopper pilot, they were all rescued. Ten required hospitalization while the other 10 returned to Missoula. I was working in the loft when they arrived late one night; all of them held the "thousand-yard stare" common to combat victims.

The Higgins Ridge Fire finally went the way of all fires and slowly succumbed to the efforts of massive manpower and aerial attack. Mother Nature helped even more as the changing weather cooled the fire down and the rains of early September began to fall. The 1961 fire season was history.

The season had begun with a bang in early June and ended just as suddenly on the last day of August, but with all the intense action thousands of us firefighters enjoyed, I'll never forget the fire on Higgins Ridge.

As 75th Anniversary Approaches, We Should Remember These Smokejumping Trailblazers

by Roland M. Stoleson (Missoula '56)

This year marks the 75th anniversary of the first operational use of smokejumpers for forest firefighting. It is well known that in 1940, fires were fought in U.S. Forest Service Regions 1 and 6 by men who were delivered to the fires by parachute.

These actions brought to fruition the dedicated experiments conducted a year earlier at Winthrop, Wash., where some 60 experimental parachute jumps were made into forests of the region, proving the feasibility of the smokejumping concept.

Roy Mitchell, assistant supervisor of the Chelan National Forest, where the experimentation took place, documented those tests in a paper replicated on page 12 of the April 2015 issue of *Smokejumper*. In the first paragraph, Mitchell says, "Parachute jumping was not new. Neither was the proposal to use parachutes to transport men to fires as other regions had discussed it for several years."

Mitchell was correct. The proposal to transport men to fires by parachute was first suggested in 1934 by Thomas V. Pearson, assistant to the chief of operation in Region 4 at Ogden, Utah. But his idea became more than a proposal.

Experiments were conducted in the spring of 1935 and were noted in an article titled "Parachutes For Fire Fighters" on page 704 in the Christmas 1935 issue of *American Forests*:

"Whether spectators of future forest fires will be thrilled to see a picked company of forest rangers leap from airplanes and drop with parachutes to the fire line depends upon tests now being carried on at the Ogden, Utah, airport.

"The latest device to be tried out by the United States Forest Service in its annual battle with the red enemy is a new type of parachute which will land the forest ranger near the fire line direct from an airplane without the bother of walking or riding from the nearest landing field.

"Having used planes to deliver food and equipment to forest fire fighters, the air-minded foresters have invented a quick-releasing safety harness, and have added a one and a half-inch diameter tube to the

perimeter of the parachute which when inflated causes a quick opening upon release. To further minimize free-falling distance the fireman descends through an aperture in the airplane floor down a lightweight ladder until suspended in the parachute shroud lines. The pilot releases the parachute at the right moment and his weight draws the parachute from the container in the ship's floor.

"So far only limited proof of the practicability of this idea is available in the form of thirty-four consecutive successful drops of a 165-pound dummy and two deliveries of a man at elevations of from 400 to 150 feet above the ground."

Additional information and conclusions about the 1934 and 1935 events was given on page 4 of the November 1954 issue of the Region 4 retirees' *Old Timers* newsletter:

"So far as the record goes, the first consideration of the use of parachutes to transport firefighters is credited to T. V. Pearson who retired from the Forest Service a number of years ago."

"So far as the record goes, the first consideration of the use of parachutes to transport fire fighters is credited to T.V. Pearson who retired from the Forest Service a number of years ago.

"Pearson, who at the time (1934) was assistant to the Chief of Operation in Region 4, had talked with a professional parachute jumper about the possibilities and was convinced of the practicability of such a project. Characteristic of the times, there was little enthusiasm for the idea, but Pearson was permitted to hire the professional (J.B. Bruce) as a warehouse assistant and was given a small amount of money with which to

carry on his experiments. These were conducted during the spring of 1935.

"A second-hand chute was purchased for \$10.00 and converted to a quick-release type; a number of dummy tests were made and Bruce made two successful live jumps employing the low-altitude technique.

"The consensus of the Washington office and western regions, although there were no mishaps, was that the project was too risky and it was abandoned at the close of the fiscal year."

Michael Frome, author of the 1962 book *Whose Woods These Are*, put another spin on this early attempt to parachute firefighters. On page 217, he states:

"The first Forest Service experiment of record in the use of a parachutist as fire fighter was made as far back as 1934 by Tom V. Pearson at Ogden, Utah. Pearson hired a stunt jumper at a county fair for \$25 to fly over the forest and test the practicality of landing in the trees. Not only was Pearson's report rejected, but his \$25 voucher was disallowed – and he had to pay it out of his own pocket."

This account is obviously hyped, but it did recognize Pearson as the originator of the idea to deliver firefighters by parachute in 1934.

The April issue of *Smokeyjumper* contained an article titled "Who Were the Pioneer Smokejumpers." I'd

like to add to that article and ask: "Who Were the Trailblazers of Smokejumping?" The answers should be obvious when considering the documented history available.

Thomas V. Pearson should be the chief trailblazer for his proposal and belief in the concept of parachute delivery of firefighters. J.B. Bruce should also be recognized and remembered as making the first live jump to evaluate Pearson's proposal. Although these early experiments were abandoned, the idea lived on in the minds of others and five years later would mature into one of the most progressive fire-control innovations in the United States.

Many questions remain about this earliest experimentation with parachuting firefighters. What type of aircraft was used for the testing in Ogden? Who was J.B. Bruce (i.e., where was he from and what was his age)? Why were the 1939 rebirth tests conducted at Winthrop rather than at their birthplace in Ogden? I have several assumptions about these matters but believe a serious examination of records could and should be made to provide more certainty. This is a work in progress.

I wish to thank the Librarians at the Rocky Mountain Research Station for their help in locating documents pertinent to this paper.

A "Floyd-Or-Lloyd" Story

by Jerry Hagen (Missoula '75)

I believe it was 1976. We jumped a fire on the Salmon River breaks with **Larry Eisenman** (MSO-58) as the foreman. Notably, he was the first stick out. I believe I was around the third stick.

There wasn't much of a jump spot, other than a small 100-foot opening between the trees and rocks on a ridge. The winds were strong and squirrely. I missed the top of the ridge and our so-called "jump spot." I came down on the hillside below the spot, which was covered with large rocks and downfall logs.

Initially, I thought I was going to get hurt really badly, as all I

had to come down on were those logs and rocks. Miraculously, I did a roll across two logs and landed on the uphill side of a third one. Shaken, but unhurt, I gathered up my gear and climbed to the jump spot. Eisenman was standing there and grumbling about why "everyone is scattered all over hell."

After getting geared up and waiting about an hour for everyone to gather about – as everyone *was* scattered all over hell! – Floyd (**Whitaker/RDD-65**) came crawling up to the top of the ridge. He was as "white as a ghost." His Levis blue jeans were all torn up, and he looked like he

had been dragged under a freight train.

Eisenman glared at him and, in his normal tone of voice, asked him what took him so long. Floyd said, "I had a parachute malfunction. The only thing that saved my ass was that I slid down a talus slope that broke my fall. It took me this long to crawl back up!"

That could have happened to any of us, and I am sure if it had, we would not have survived. But for Floyd, he kissed the "Grim Reaper" once again.

During that entire time on the fire, I had never witnessed Floyd to be so humble.





National Smokejumper Reunion



July 17, 18 & 19, 2015

Missoula, Montana

Photos & Illustration: Johnny Kirkley (CJ-64)

Reunion Website Info:

<http://smj2015reunion.wordpress.com>

Last call to Round-up

Be There or Be Square



SOUNDING OFF from the editor



by Chuck Sheley
(Cave Junction '59)
MANAGING EDITOR

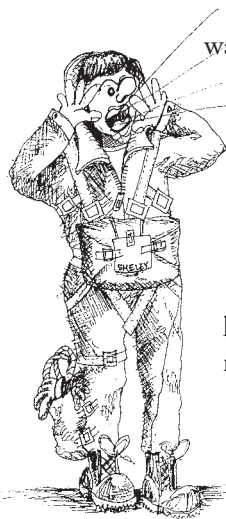
Wow, THESE LAST few months have flown by since the April issue of *Smokeyjumper*. With my concerns about the revision of smoke-jumper history by the USFS, websites, and a couple of new books, I spent a tremendous amount of time researching and writing the evaluation of Operation Firefly for the April issue. I don't know if we will ever change or slow the flow of misinformation about that particular five months in 1945. However, the facts written used primary documents from the time as sources of information. If historians and future authors chose to read that information, it is up to them.

I have stated that I believe all rookie smokejumpers should have a session in smokejumper history added to their rookie training. If the current smokejumpers know our roots and where we came from, it will be harder for future individuals to make changes. We all need to know who the **Derry brothers** (MSO-40) and **Glenn Smith** (MSO-40) were and their

contribution to our profession.

Yesterday, April 10th, **Jerry Spence** (RDD-94) invited me back for the 2nd year to give the R-5 rookies a 90-minute smokejumper history session.

Prior to my history lesson, **Bob Bente** (RDD-88) took me out to where the rooks were doing their early morning PT. They had already been going an hour before I arrived at 0800. I remembered back to the day I watched Bob, a smile on his face, lead a class of 1999



was living in Chico, on fitness training over the last two months. As a track coach, I planned various interval and speed workouts, and we met two-three times at the local high school track for training sessions. He handled the long distance runs, push-ups, pull-ups and weight workouts on his own. I added 30 minutes of pool work to the regimen. Having also been a Cross Country coach for over 30 years, I found that inserting a pool workout into a hard running program did a fantastic job of cutting down

All rookie smokejumpers should have a session in smokejumper history added to their rookie training. If the current smokejumpers know our roots and where we came from, it will be harder for future individuals to make changes.

rooks through a grueling PT session. Now, Bob is one of the three jumpers still in the business from the 1988 class.

There were 11 remaining from the starting number of 12. The size of the individuals and amount of muscle was pretty impressive. They went from push-ups, sit-ups, pull-ups to bar dips and started the whole routine again. Anyone who reports thinking they just have to do the basic minimums is in for a shock. How about doing the minimums every 15 minutes.

I had the good luck to be able to advise one of the rooks, who

injuries and the aches and pains that come with a heavy training program.

As a teacher and a coach, I was very impressed with his attitude and dedication to training. He already had seven seasons of wildland firefighting—they don't hire two-season people any more.

It was an enjoyable 90 minutes of smokejumper history with these men. I would love to have the opportunity to give that history presentation to all the rookies at all the bases. They will be the future "Keepers of the Flame."

This issue should reach you before the 75th Anniversary of Smokejumping National Reunion in Missoula. I've been marketing anniversary merchandise for the last year and have been busy. I hope that indicates that you will be there July 17-19.

I've stated to several people that this might be the last of the big reunions and have received questions as to why I feel that way. Since the 2004 reunion in Missoula, I've written 430 obits for the "Off The List" column in this magazine. Those are just the ones that I know about. The names could make a "Who's Who of Smokejumping." Out of the WWII CPS-103 jumpers, we must be down to five-six left. We are an aging group.

Still, we are able to keep our membership at a fairly decent number. From a high of 1627 jumpers in January 2007, we had 1426 for the April 2015 mailing. We still have another 1500 out there who are not NSA members. A high number of non-members use our website and attend the NSA-sponsored reunions. If you know one of them, please encourage them to join. We are the keepers of the smokejumper flame and need everyone's support to remain strong.

That said, the donations to our annual President's Letter hit an all-time high for 2014. Your dues pay for the magazine and the website, the donations allow us to function as an organization, give scholarships, and aid fellow jumpers and their families through the Good Samaritan Fund. Many thanks to all of you for your generosity.

Get your reunion registration form filled out and mailed. I hope to be able to see you at Missoula in July.

Wanted - Donated Items for 2015 National Reunion

We are looking for anything from guided fishing trips, knives, apparel, framed prints, pottery, etc. for the Silent Auction. We are also looking for larger items that might be raffle item(s) or even a live auction item.

All proceeds will go to the National Smokejumper Association to assist in helping our brothers and sisters in need.

The sales price of donated items will/can go toward a down payment on a NSA Life membership. If the item is large enough, could pay the entire cost and you become a life member.

If you have interest, please contact Doug Houston, (406) 370-9141 or duhouston73@gmail.com. My personal goal is \$10,000 in final sales. Should be fun. Doug

Get *Smokejumper* One Month Before Anyone Else

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

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

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

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

Are You Going To Be "Temporarily Away"?

As more of our membership moves with the weather, we are getting an ever-increasing number of *Smokejumper* magazines returned by the post office marked "Temporarily Away." Since we mail the magazine via bulk mail, it is not forwarded, and we are charged first class postage for its return.

If you are leaving your mailing address during the months of March, June, September and/or December, please let Chuck Sheley know. He can hold your magazine and mail it upon your return *OR* mail it to your seasonal address. Please help us save this triple mailing expense. Or join our email list (see above). Chuck's contact information is in the information box on page three. 📧

SAM PFAHLER AND TODD JOHNSON RECEIVE AL DUNTON LEADERSHIP AWARDS

Congratulations to Sam and Todd for their selection for the Al Dunton Leadership Award. Assistant Foreman, **Dan Cottrell** (MSO-01), nominated Sam and tells us why:

SAM PFAHLER (MSO-03) personifies many, if not all of the identified qualities that are listed as prerequisites for the Al Dunton Award. Sam makes sound and timely decisions. He sets a strong example for other smokejumpers and he develops his subordinates for the future.

While Sam is an excellent smokejumper and also embodies the Forest Service principles of duty, respect and integrity, the reason I am nominating Sam is something he has done that goes well above and beyond his duties as a smokejumper. Sam's involvement in the creation of an agreement between the Missoula Smokejumper base and the Missoula District of the Bureau of Land Management has been extensive. This agreement provides the smokejumper staff with extensive work in hazardous fuels reduction, timber stand improvement, and prescribed fire, along with other forest management projects. Sam's dedication to maintaining this relationship has reaped huge benefits to the smokejumper program.

This agreement has allowed us to employ our temporary and short-term appointment employees in the spring and fall shoulder seasons. It has allowed us to expose smokejumpers to management roles on district and forest level implementation projects. Our jumpers have gained experience through this agreement writing burn plans, doing NEPA analysis, and working with the public to accomplish forest management and forest health projects. Finally, the agreement has opened various trainee assignments to smokejumpers especially in regards to Prescribed Fire Burn Boss (RXB2) and Firing Boss (FIRB) assignments.

While to many, maintaining an agreement such as this may not seem like a big deal. The average Smokejumper probably doesn't even realize the tons of work that goes into keeping this relationship going, or the sacrifices Sam makes for their benefit. There are pre-season meetings, site visits, cost tracking and budget databases that need to be kept up, and endless phone calls between the cooperators. While it's not a glorious project and Sam would probably rather be jumping fires or out in the field, he, nonetheless, recognizes the importance of keeping this partnership a healthy one. Sam thinks about what is best for the program,

as opposed to what is best for him. Thanks to Sam's selflessness and tireless efforts, there is work for the bros when they return in the spring, and if we have a slow fire season or smokejumpers are looking to work into the fall, Sam has projects lined up and ready to go. Sam's efforts with the BLM agreement have made the prospect of getting laid off early a thing of the past in Missoula.

One of the principles of the Al Dunton Award is that the nominee looks out for the well-being of their subordinates, and builds the team. Sam personifies this because he is humble and doesn't have a selfish bone in his body. He works to empower those that work for him, and by thinking first of what's good for the program. While he would be the last to say it, he deserves to be recognized for his efforts. Sam's work to create and maintain this agreement with the BLM has made the entire Missoula Smokejumper program stronger and better prepared for the demands of the future.

TODD JOHNSON (NIFC-98) was nominated by the Great Basin Smokejumpers for the Al Dunton award as a person who embodies the qualities needed in a person who receives this award. From their narrative:

In 1998 Todd sent in one last application to become a BLM Smokejumper after applying the seven previous years without success. Todd was not initially hired but, one week before training was to start, Todd got the offer to start with the 1998 BLM rookie class in Fairbanks, Alaska. With only one week's notice, Todd showed up to rookie training and quickly rose to the top of his rookie class as the most physically fit candidate in the group. Todd has continued to excel and lead by example, not only in the field of physical fitness, but in his selfless attitude and dedication to uncompromising fire leadership. Todd is often called upon by leadership to step into leadership roles, both in and out of the jump program. His willingness to always accept these challenges without complaint is a model for all smokejumpers.

In 2012, the Boise BLM District lost their Unit Aviation Manager to retirement and Todd was asked to take over the program for the summer until a replacement could be found. Todd accepted the challenge knowing it would impact his fire season and would be a setback for achieving some of his long-term career goals in fire. Todd did an outstanding job in a role that he had never done before. In speaking with pilots and con-

tractors of all types who worked with him that summer, it was apparent that the level at which Todd operates, both personally and professionally, is without equal.

Todd has been an active ATGS and has contributed greatly to the success of the BLM ATGS program throughout the years. Throughout the summer of 2013, while recovering from an injury, Todd, once

again, stepped in to help the wildfire community attain its goals by dedicating himself to an ASM platform for most of the season.

Todd's decision making and supervision as the Assistant Operations Manager has helped the BLM Smokejumper program be a success in fire management both in the Bureau and with cooperators.

Jumper Returns To Fire Business After 30-Year Layoff

by Gary Shade (Missoula '69)

With over 30 years since my last fire call, I had a chance last summer to get back on the fireline with my experience and qualifications as a professional trucker. After twenty years in the financial services biz, I've spent the last six years doing something I always wanted to try, "truckin." In August 2014, I was out two weeks on a fire complex in southern Oregon operating a 3,000-gallon water tender.

The downside of the job was having aching ribs after sleeping on the ground for two weeks. This getting old crap ain't for wimps. Oh, and the upside, I made \$4,200 in 14 days. The following report was turned into my boss at Grayback Forestry, White City, Oregon. (*Grayback Forestry is owned by NSA Life Member Mike Wheelock CJ-76 Ed.*)

On August 11, 2014, I was assigned in Tanker-5



Gary Shade and Tanker 5 (Courtesy G. Shade)

to the Camp Creek Fire Complex on the Rogue River National Forest. In the early evening of August 11, our Initial Attack Strike Team was dispatched to an active 100-acre fire threatening structures several miles south of Shady Cove, Oregon. The Strike Team was made up of about 20 vehicles and was to initially regroup and stage in the Shady Cover Market parking lot. As water tender, I brought up the rear of the convoy and took my time getting off the mountain down to the fire in the valley.

When I drove into the heart of Shady Cove and approached the market, the scene before me can only be described as a “cluster f__k.” I apologize for the language, but I can’t think of a better set of words. The convoy was stacked up in the market parking area and had just been told they were to immediately leave town and head several miles south to another staging area closer to the fire.

The lead trucks in the Strike Team were trying to get out of the parking area, but the heavy private vehicle traffic heading south on 62 was not cooperating. This had the makings of a grand “C.F.” in the heart of town. Seeing this, I pulled my tender off to the side of the road and jumped out of the truck. After putting on my hazard flashers, I stepped into the middle of the southbound lane and raised my hand-held radio high in the air, and made the south bound traffic stop. With my free arm, I vigorously waved the Strike Team onto the highway. When the whole convoy was safely headed down the road, I let the private vehicles continue their merry way.

The next morning at the routine morning briefing, the Incident Command’s Safety Boss made note of my attempt at traffic control. He said, “Yesterday, when our Strike Team was put in a potentially unsafe traffic situation in Shady Cove, our Grayback tender driver recognized this safety issue and pulled his truck partially off the road and stopped traffic. He took control of the situation until our fire fighters were out of harm’s way. There was a risk involved to him, but he made the right call and did what was needed to keep our firefighters safe. I expect that we all have this heads-up attitude about watching out for each other and when you see an unsafe act or hazardous situation, you should take action to keep your fellow fire fighters safe.”

After the Safety Boss’s comments, I looked up at the Overhead Team’s faces and they were all looking at me with smiles and approving nods.

Gary has written an interesting book covering his and Barb’s six years spent as long-haul truck drivers. If you want an enjoyable read, you should get a copy of “The Hotshot Chronicles” from Gary at gshade52@gmail.com.

Festival Honoring Maclean Slated For Seeley Lake

A four-day festival will honor renowned author Norman Maclean in Seeley Lake, Montana, July 10-13.

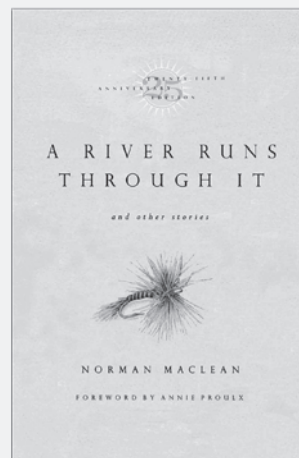
Maclean is perhaps best known in the smokejumping community as the author of *Young Men and Fire*. The Alpine Artisans organization created this festival, highlighting those who remember Maclean’s life in Seeley Lake and those who worked with him as he wrote the book. Writers and scholars who have reviewed, analyzed and appreciate Maclean’s works will also attend.

Also scheduled are tours of the actual fishing holes described in the book and film *A River Runs Through It* and updates on the successful conservation efforts on the Blackfoot River.

Festival events are scheduled on the Blackfoot, in Seeley Lake at the Double Arrow Resort, and at nearby Camp Paxson on Seeley Lake. Camp Paxson was the site of Montana’s first smokejumper training center and will host the event’s Sunday focus on *Young Men and Fire* and the heritage of smokejumping in Montana.

Saturday’s events will recognize Maclean’s writings and *A River Runs Through It*. Monday’s events will feature a writers’ workshop and a tour of Mann Gulch, the scene of the tragic wildfire documented in *Young Men and Fire*.

You can find more program details at www.macleannotsteps.com.



BOOK REVIEWS

A Look at Richard Holm's book - *Bound for the Backcountry*

by R. K. Dick Williams (Pilot)

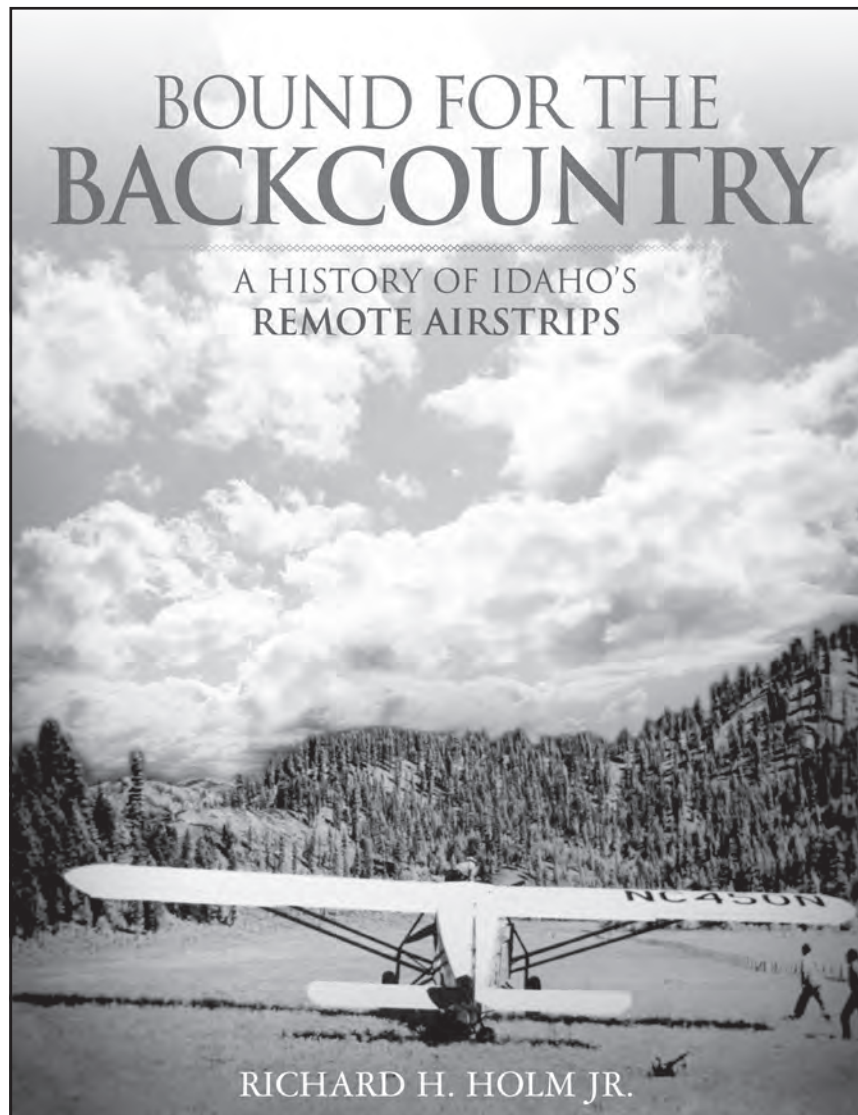
Smokejumpers need airplanes. They might not all love them, but they can't do their jobs without them. As a smokejumper pilot for ten years, I came to realize, and maybe even begin to understand, the love/hate relationship many of these elite firefighters have with their mode of transportation.

Many jumpers consider the ride to the fire more dangerous than the jump itself, or the firefight. They, like many normal people, don't all like airplanes. And many strong personality types just don't like to give up control of their lives to a qualified pilot or anyone else!

However, some famous jumper pilots, like **Jim Larkin** and **Nels Jensen** (MSO-62) - I was fortunate to be able to fly with them both - earned great respect from the jumpers for their steady hands and cargo delivery accuracy.

There is certainly a close relationship between jumpers, the birthplace of their mission in the Idaho backcountry, and the aircraft that enable them to do their incredible firefighting work. That is why they will be interested in Holm's massive 570-page book - *Bound For The Backcountry: A History of Idaho's Remote Airstrips*. Not only does it expand on earlier books on the subject, it goes into great detail about the aircraft and aviation support of smokejumping.

Smokejumpers and pilots alike will enjoy Holm's history book



on Idaho aviation. He documents airstrips, pilots, homesteaders, lodges, ranger stations, etc., and accompanies each with tremendous old pictures of airplanes, pilots and jumpers.

Holm methodically approaches the subject, first with an historic overview, then with a trip down the Middle Fork of the Salmon River, including USFS involvement with airstrips and

guard stations along the way. He includes the major drainages of Loon Creek, Camas Creek, and Big Creek on his journey before a couple of side trips up the historic South Fork and the East Fork of the South Fork.

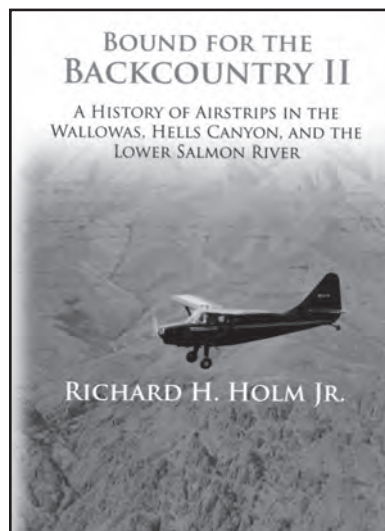
From there he takes us around the Chamberlain Basin and on down into the Main Salmon River. The reader is treated to the rich airplane history of Travelairs,

Trimotors, Piper Cubs, and Cessna 185s along the way. The Flossie Fire of 1966 gets some special recognition.

Next, Mr. Holm heads north through the Clearwater Mountains, denoting ten separate historic locations on his way into the Selway-Bitterroot Wilderness. He goes through all the Selway ranches and up to Fish Lake between the Selway Crags and the Lochsa River. His section on Moose Creek is exceptionally rich in fire and smokejumper lore, including never before printed details of the first official jump to a wildland fire, and of course, a thorough account of the tragic DC-3 accident in the Selway in June 1979.

Not willing to end there, Holm devotes an entire chapter to the "Evolution of Smoke-jumper Aircraft," followed by stories about communication, spruce budworm control, salt distribution, beaver relocation, fish planting, game management, mail routes, fire lookouts, and backcountry flying in film.

Although not meant to be a "crash book," Holm does incorporate a very interesting chapter titled "World War II Military Airplane Crashes In The Backcountry." To my knowledge, this is another first. He gives the reader the most comprehensive



accounts of both the Douglas B-23 that crashed at Loon Lake and the Boeing B-17 that crashed near Challis (crew bailed out along the Middle Fork of the Salmon River in March 1943). Both sagas are backed by primary documentation, including never before published information obtained from rescue pilots **Penn Stohr Sr.** and **Dick Johnson's** (many may recognize as early jumper pilots) logbooks. Holm completes this new book, referred to by many enthusiasts of the region as the "Backcountry Bible," by including meticulous chapters on every Travelair 6000 and Ford Trimotor that flew in the Idaho backcountry. What a tremendous single source that makes it the go-to book on a multitude of

subjects. The detailed index in the back makes it enjoyable to research a particular subject or area.

Bound For The Backcountry: A History Of Idaho's Remote Airstrips, is a quality coffee table book with over 1000 photographs. By far the most comprehensive book on Idaho backcountry aviation ever available, it is bound to become the standard that similar books will be compared to. He has recently released a followup edition (Volume II), which is a similar approach to the history of airstrips and aviation in the Wallowa Mountains, Hells Canyon, and the Lower Salmon River. Jumpers with experience in the area of eastern Oregon and western Idaho will recognize many places and pilots in this book.

The cost for Volume I in hardbound is \$59.95, in softbound \$39.95, and the cost for Volume II is \$29.95. Each copy requires a \$6.00 shipping fee (reduced for multiple orders). Books are available through select bookstores, the website: www.coldmountainpress.com, or by contacting the author directly by email: boundforthebackcountry@gmail.com, facebook (boundforthebackcountry), or mail at: Cold Mountain Press (c/o), Richard H. Holm Jr., P.O. Box 294, McCall, ID 83638.

Coming Soon—"A Few Jumper Stories"

by Rod Dow (McCall '68)

HOW MANY GREAT stories from smokejumpers in the past have now been lost because nobody wrote them down? That's why, when I retired from jumping in 1999, I began writing down one-sentence reminders to myself of things that happened during my career. I ended up with almost 200 of them and a few months

ago, finally started writing them out in full.

Just a Few Jumper Stories is a collection of 70 of them, mostly funny stories, but also some more serious notes, from my years in McCall and Alaska, with a few from other guys thrown in. Jump stories, pilot stories, fireline stories, silly stuff from back at the

base, you know what I mean. My purpose was simply to archive the events. I doubt if anybody but you guys would be interested in them, but I loved those years and I hope the book repays in small part my enormous debt to smokejumping.

Here's what Murry Taylor wrote on the back cover: "When it comes to telling



celebration of life. Read this and laugh your butt off."

Jokers; War, Love, and Helicopter Pilots— What Could Go Wrong?

Review by Karl Hartzell
(Boise '70)

Authors **Vern Hammill** (MYC-66) and **Ed Kral** (MYC-66), long term friends since they first met as "Neds" in McCall

and later returned stateside as Vietnam vets, collaborated in constructing this attention holding, adventure story which adeptly relates the daily do-ings, but many times harrowing

mission experiences, that were apparently typical for "Huey" helicopter pilots who served in and near combat zones in the Vietnam War. From this platform that succeeds in fleshing out

In July, 1969, the Vietnam War is at its peak and helicopter pilots Eric Bader and Paul Eason have been in the thick of the action. They have just spent the last year flying a thousand combat missions and decide to extend their Vietnam tours to get early discharges from their military service. If Eric and Paul can survive the next six months of war, they will be out of the Army and headed for a winter of skiing in the beautiful Austrian mountain town of St. Anton. Little do they know a Cold War adventure lies ahead--their mission, rescue an East German family that was caught on the wrong side of the Iron Curtain.

Jokers is the vivid, sometimes-funny, sometimes-harrowing account of their journey.

The Authors

The two authors met as twenty year old rookie Smokejumpers fighting forest fires out of the mountain town of McCall, Idaho.



Vern Hammill - After college, Vern joined the Army as a warrant officer helicopter pilot. He served in Vietnam with the 48th Assault Helicopter Company, as a Slick pilot for one year and a "Joker" Gunship pilot for six months. Vern made a career out of flying helicopters and has just passed 25,000 flight hours. He lives with his wife Laurie in Grants Pass, Oregon.



Edward Kral - Ed served in Vietnam with the 9th Infantry Division's Mobil Riverine Assault Force. After the Army, he graduated from the University of Iowa. Following college, he spent more than thirty years flying fixed-wing aircraft for the U.S. Forest Service, mostly as a Lead Plane pilot for Airtankers dropping retardant on wild fires. Ed still resides in McCall, Idaho where he is penning his next project.

Jokers - War, Love and Helicopter Pilots

Vern Hammill & Edward Kral

Jokers *War, Love and Helicopter Pilots - What Could Go Wrong?*



Vern Hammill & Edward Kral

the personalities, leanings, and skills inherent to each of the two protagonists, pilots Eric Bader and Paul Eason, the reader is quickly taken from their Vietnam service fulfillment to a European setting. Now enjoying a needed release into leisure and skiing in the Austrian Alps, the two chopper pilots are offered and accept a beyond-the-Iron-Curtain rescue mission which will utilize their Vietnam-gained, chopper piloting expertise.

In personal communication with both authors, explanation was provided of how their book came together. Vern, by virtue of his experience as both a support and gunship helicopter pilot in Vietnam, called upon many a memory to weave a factual recollection and flowing story that competently captures the day-to-day experience of the fictional characters, Bader and Eason. We follow these guys through every facet of their Vietnam service: going on chopper missions that were never routine, but nearly always fraught with enemy fire and unforeseen glitches; working with commanding officers and crew members who were top-notch, as well as those of that always-present incompetent minority; getting away for needed R and R in some mostly safe city; drinking through many a post-mission bull session with fellow pilots in the officers' club; and all the while sweating through the ever pervasive tropical heat and humidity of Vietnam.

According to Ed, who later received training and became a career fixed-wing pilot after his service in Vietnam, "probably 90% of what was written by Vern [regarding Vietnam chopper pilot stories and experiences] is true." For a reader, either familiar or not with the operation of

a chopper such as the UH-1, or Huey, and its role in Vietnam, *Jokers* provides an eye-opening overview of what this chopper could handle and what the men who crewed it endured. An apt example from the book has Bader at the controls, but in a very tight spot as he attempts to rescue some Green Berets hunkering in elephant grass and surrounded by the enemy.

Eric saw a place that the troops had trampled down and maneuvered his rapidly falling helicopter to that spot. He called his door gunners. "Get ready to go hot. We don't know what we have down here." Eric hunched over the controls and the crew knew this was not a normal landing.

Over the clearing, Eric pulled pitch into the blades to start their flare. The ship groaned as it tried to overcome a combination of too high an altitude and far too much weight [due to a recently acquired full fuel load, courtesy of Eric's green co-pilot]. When he realized he could no longer slow their descent, Eric exhaled in disgust and yelled, "Hang on."

Dust flew as they hit the ground and the rotor blades flexed down and clipped the tall grass. As the blades flexed back up, Eric didn't feel anything unusual in the controls, so he was fairly certain the blades hadn't knocked anything off the tail section. He glared at his ashen-faced co-pilot and said, "Love it." He quickly turned to his two gunners and said, "Get 'em on board, guys, load 'em up."

Such is the drama that carries *Jokers* through more than two thirds of its length. In the final third, the reader can revel in the freedom and carefree life that is afforded the now civilian ski bums, Bader and Eason, as they

embrace the good life of perfect powder and lovely ladies encountered in their long anticipated getaway to the Austrian Alps. But not for long. They soon accept an irresistible, moneyed proposition and begin preparations to fetch a doctor's East German family from a pick-up point in communist-held Czechoslovakia, using a French Alouette helicopter. As Vern relates, this part of the story was Ed's contribution, a many decades gestating scenario he long desired to bring to print.

Propelled by Vern's lucid storytelling from Vietnam, Bader and Eason's continuing adventure as two now loose and commitment-free vagabonds, having fun but ready for another challenge, mostly works. But given how the life of a helicopter pilot in Vietnam is so richly detailed and explained earlier, the story of the characters' Austria-based rescue exploit and its dramatic conclusion, though historically plausible and geographically accurate, seems cut short. It deserves more breadth and weight. Perhaps providing additional description of setting and helicopter used, and more thoroughly detailing the rapid progression of events that unfold into the suspenseful, but too quick conclusion, would have served to bolster the ending of this lively tale and thus make it more in balance with the Vietnam portion of the book.

With that perceived shortcoming noted, authors Kral and Hammill appear to have succeeded in making *Jokers* a solid story that is certainly informative, often entertaining, and nicely spiked with anxious moments to keep the reader attentively engaged to its finish.

THE VIEW FROM OUTSIDE THE FENCE



by **Chris Sorensen**
(Associate)

WE HAVE BEEN hearing rumors for several years about the possible closing of the North Cascades and West Yellowstone bases. We had not heard anything recent about NCSB closing, but the *West Yellowstone News* reported in February and April about the future of the base in West Yellowstone.

According to the article, the base needs \$5 million to \$10 million in repairs, upgrades and improvements – including resurfacing the ramp, fixing a broken water line, repairing flood damage from a broken pipe last winter, upgrade of the septic system, and general repairs and upgrades. The current base was built in 1965 to accommodate 15 jumpers.

The options:

- Investing \$5 million to \$10 million in the current facility and have a base that will be useable for the next 50 years or more. The minimum investment is \$5.2 million.

- Closing the base and moving the 30 jumpers and overhead to Missoula.
- Building a new base in Belgrade, Montana, at Gallatin Field, the busiest airport in Montana in terms of passengers.
- Moving the base to Billings.

Leasing a new base would cost an estimated \$1.55 million (\$242,233 annually). To buy existing buildings and lease land at the airport in Belgrade or Billings would cost \$5.45 million (\$115,108 annually). Moving the West Yellowstone jumpers to Missoula would cost \$3.95 million (\$83,195 annually).

The Custer Gallatin National Forest encompassing seven ranger districts has been requesting money for upgrades for the past 10 years with no luck.

Projects and cost:

- Ramp work: estimated \$2.96 million
- Roads and buildings: \$600,000 each
- Water and wastewater upgrades: \$750,000

The 800-pound gorilla in the room is the 15 C-23 Short Sherpa airplanes being assigned to the smokejumper program. The Sherpa doesn't perform well at the altitudes encountered in the Great Yellowstone area and cannot fly with a full smokejumper payload on hot days out of either West Yellowstone or Silver City.

If a Sherpa is assigned to West Yellowstone in the future, smokejumper operational capability

is going to be compromised, at least, on hot days.

Closing West Yellowstone and moving everyone to Missoula seems to leave a large area in Eastern Montana with a slower response time and a greater potential for small fires to grow into large fires. A base in Billings would eliminate the need to boost Miles City, so there would be at least some savings there.

It would seem the best option would be a major investment in the West Yellowstone base. A decision will be made this fall. Closure of West Yellowstone, if that's the decision, would probably take about five years.

Should West Yellowstone close, the National Smokejumper Association will need to be proactive to protect the material culture of the West Yellowstone Smokejumper Base – including photographs, jump records, old gear, etc. – lest we face another Cave Junction situation where much of the material history of the Siskiyou base ended up in dumpsters when the base closed.

I ASKED JACK Hughes' son-in-law, Ed Kemmick, about the photo of Jack in the last issue of *Smokejumper*.

Ed said that photo was taken around 1962 as part of a national advertising campaign for Lipton Tea. The theme was a series of ads showing people with unusual jobs drinking Lipton Tea. For some unknown reason, the advertising campaign was scrapped and the photo was never used.

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The **SMOKEJUMPERS** cap offers gold embroidery and trim with a velcro strap. The **U.S. Forest Service** cap has a brass buckle and green-and-white "sandwich"-style bill, while the **Siskiyou** cap is a rich royal blue with khaki bill and brass headband buckle. Why not order one of each?

- **SMOKEJUMPERS** cap \$19.95 • **U.S. Forest Service Smokejumpers** cap \$15.95 •
- **Siskiyou Smokejumper Base logo** cap \$15.95 •

You asked for them ... and now they're here!

Perseverance pays off! We received dozens of requests for window decals and we now have a large supply in our inventory. These stickers show your pride in "the greatest job in the world!" Each one measures 2½ high by 4 inches wide. Buy a bunch – **you get FREE shipping!** **\$2.95**



Polyester weave that's so silky-smooth, it truly fools your skin!

Scratchy and heavy, polyester used to be a material that offered easy care compared to cotton and wool ... but wasn't easy on your skin. Now, try this 3.8-ounce, 100-percent polyester polo shirt from SportTek's Dry Zone. It keeps you cool by wicking moisture AWAY from your skin ... with a weave that's silky smooth and so light you'll hardly know it's there.

Sharp, embroidered **SMOKEJUMPERS** logo on the left front. Choose from black, navy blue, forest green and white. Available sizes include S, M, L, XL and XXL. **As this is a custom order, please allow 3-4 weeks for delivery.** **\$29.95**



Are you still hangin' around?

These high-quality t-shirts feature spectacular artwork of an "old" smokejumper dangling from a tree. Ash-gray t-shirt will withstand many years of washing. Perfect for the gym, around the house or around town! M, L, XL and XXL. **\$16.95**



Our most popular t-shirt!

People love this shirt ... and the quantity we've sold proves it! Shirt features stylized "**SMOKEJUMPERS**" on the front with fabulous artwork of jumping action on back. Hazy light blue (M, L, XL, XXL) with short sleeves. **\$16.95**

Polo shirts that bring you style and comfort! How will you wear them?

Honeycomb pique ... it offers breathability and outright comfort – combined with sharp, crisp looks – better than anything on the market. You get it all with these outstanding polo-style shirts ... with the **SMOKEJUMPERS** logo embroidered on the chest.

This is a special-order shirt, meaning you should expect 3-4 weeks for delivery.

Looks great on the golf course, tennis court or with a pair of cotton slacks. Wear it to "dress up" a pair of jeans. You can't go wrong! S, M, L, XL and XXL. Red, navy, black, green and white. **\$31.95**



Your all-time library of NSA publications



This handy thumb drive with the NSA logo contains every edition of *The Static Line* (1993-99) and *Smokeyjumper* magazine (1999-present) ever published.

Looking for an article about the early days of jumping? Trying to find a name of a smokejumper featured in a story several years ago? This thumb drive gives you total access. Makes an excellent, environmentally friendly gift!

\$24.95

Author's first-hand experience takes you to the fire lines

Ralph Ryan shows you the definition of action in ***Wildfire: Memories of a Wildland Firefighter***. Murry Taylor, author of *Jumping Fire*, says: "Wildfire is a first-hand account of one of America's last great true-life adventures – smokejumping. Live it and feel it from inside as they smokejumpers themselves do. Experience the passion, the pride, and the sheer guts of parachuting to wildfires amidst the grandeur of the mountainous West and Alaska."

\$15.95

Cave Junction jumper fought fire before going to the moon

Smoke Jumper, Moon Pilot: The Remarkable Life of Apollo Astronaut Stuart Roosa by Willie Moseley is the family-authorized biography of Apollo 14 Command Module Pilot Stuart Roosa. It's the quintessential, All-American chronicle of the life of an Oklahoma farm boy whose initiative, drive and personal integrity earned him a place among the 24 individuals who made the most dramatic voyage in human history after parachuting to fight forest fires from Cave Junction in 1953.

\$24.95



1952 movie inspired many dreams of smokejumping

Loosely based on the tragic Mann Gulch Fire in which 12 jumpers and a firefighter died, "**Red Skies of Montana**" fascinated many young men about life "out West." Released in February 1952. Color.

\$14.95



Exhaustive DVD tells story of smokejumping from the start

"**Smokejumpers: Firefighters From the Sky**" DVD is a definitive record of smokejumping, featuring 120 minutes of history from 1939 to 2000. Footage and action shots filmed at current bases and in the field.

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Good looks, durability: our heavyweight sweatshirt delivers it all

While deciding to introduce a sweatshirt to our line of apparel, we ordered the best sweatshirt on the market – this outstanding 9.5-ounce cotton that feels irresistibly soft, yet substantial. It's great for holding the chill at bay, or raising a real sweat while working out. The best part is, this weight of material lasts through years of washings while retaining its good looks.

Navy blue with gold "SMOKEJUMPERS" embroidery along with tree-and-wings logo on chest. Hooded with pockets and drawstring. Sizes: M, L, XL and XXL.

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Fleece gives you the warmth you want, without the bulkiness

Our stylish fleece with half-length zipper ... it's remarkably warm for something that weighs so little, making it perfect when you want to dress in layers.

Cuffed sleeves keep the cold off your arms. Zip it all the way up to keep your neck comfortable. Wear it once and you'll be hooked!

Navy blue with gold "SMOKEJUMPERS" embroidery along with tree-and-wings logo on chest.

Since this is a special-order item, please allow approximately two weeks to receive it. Sizes: M, L, XL and XXL.

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Big pride in this little pin

NSA pin looks great, offering the final touch of class no matter what you're wearing. Stays secure with double-post fasteners. Shiny chrome finish. **Order several ... you get FREE shipping!**

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You've been framed!

Top of this license plate frame reads "Jumpin' Fires" while the bottom reads "Smokejumpers." White letters on a black background. Buy one for each of your vehicles, and save!



\$4 each, or two for \$7

An Oregon Visit – Wine, Beer and Museums!

by Denis Symes (McCall '63)

My wife and I visited Oregon in August 2014 for a tour of the wineries in the Willamette, Central Oregon, Rogue and Applegate Valleys; craft beer breweries and museums. Oregon's Willamette Valley wines are great, but I never thought I'd get tired of Pinot Noir; after multiple tastings at 15 wineries I was "Pinot'd out." Southern Oregon wines include Bordeaux and several Riesling varietals that are top notch!

As for the craft breweries, Rogue Ales, Deschutes Brewing, and Hopworks Urban Brewery are well worth the visit! Rogue Ale's Russian Imperial stout is superb. Try it!

The Evergreen Aviation Museum in McMinnville is a top-quality museum with over 100 aircraft on display, including Howard Hughes 8-engined "Spruce Goose." Until the advent of the Boeing 747 and Airbus A-380, this was the largest aircraft ever built, and it was constructed out of wood (beech, not spruce) to conserve strategic materials. Additional exhibits include a Lockheed SR-71 with a number of accouterments that I had not seen before (e.g., electronic countermeasures equipment), Beech Stagger-wing, Douglas DC-3, Boeing B-17, P-51, FW-190, Me-109, etc. There is also a *Smokejumper exhibit* with suited mannequins in 1939 and current (Kevlar) jumper regalia. An excellent discussion of jumping and firefighting is presented in the showcase. This is one museum that is worth a detour from your chosen path to visit.

Continuing south, we visited Cave Junction and the Smokejumper Museum. It is a restoration of the base as it was during its operational days (some of the work was performed by NSA crews several years ago). There are about 15 old guys (former jumpers) living within the area and they are the museum hosts and tour guides. **Wes Brown** (CJ-66) was my host. We spent a wonderful two hours discussing the base, equipment then and now; how CJ operations differed from MYC; mutual friends **Mike McCracken** (CJ-60), **Jim Dollard** (CJ-52), **Chuck Sheley** (CJ-59), **John McDaniel** (CJ-57) and, **Rick Blackwood** (CJ-79); and old guy stuff. The amount of work required to restore the base was obvious, and it looks just like it did 50+ years ago. Actually, it is representative of USFS facilities in the 1940s and 50s, and (I believe) it merits

National Historical Landmark status!

As you enter the base, you first pass through the office/operations center. It looks ready to dispatch jumpers and for returning jumpers to stand there arguing over overtime. Period furniture and maps create the image of operational readiness. In the adjacent loft, packing tables stand ready to re-pack chutes and sewing machines are ready to repair chutes and equipment. The walls are lined with photos and jumper artwork. On a table in the rear, jump helmets (the old leather and recent motorcycle) are displayed.

In the ready room, jumpsuits are hung on hooks; the jumpers' names are engraved on brass plates above them. Several that I recognize include Chuck Sheley, John McDaniel and **Stuart Roosa** (CJ-53). There is also an excellent presentation on the 555th Parachute Infantry Battalion (Triple Nickles). A jumper firepack with shovel and Pulaski handles sticking out, with cargo chute attached, stands nearby. Remember how those shoulder straps dug into your shoulders? There is even an old potbellied stove against a wall, ready to be stoked.

Outside on the tarmac stands a Beechcraft C-45 for which restoration is planned. All parts are available, but the plane needs to be reassembled and painted; probably a job for another work crew – any takers?

Wes said that they hope to acquire a DC-3 to accompany the Beechcraft on the tarmac. A fire was burning about 10 miles from the base, and helicopter operations (with Bambi Buckets) were underway. A Sikorsky CH-64, Bell 206, and Boeing CH-46 came and went, as if on a schedule.

It is great that one old jumper base has been preserved for all to see and will serve as a legacy to all. It is the way things were, and it's a shame that things have changed.





ODDS AND ENDS



by Chuck Sheley

Congratulations and thanks to Larry Newman (MSO-60) who just became our latest **Life Member**.

Gary Hannon (MSO-60): "Hi Chuck, I just finished the April issue of *Smokejumper*. You did yourself proud. It was an outstanding work on the Pioneer Smokejumpers and Pilots. It needed to be done before the history is lost. The article on Operation Firefly needed to be set straight. I enjoyed it. You did a very good job on Gars Obit. I know he would approve. Again Bravo."

Bill Derr (Associate-USFS Ret. Law Enforcement): "Your Triple Nickle articles were 'outstanding.' Facts outweigh fiction every time. I continue to be concerned about how well the National Forests are being managed and whether fire suppression is on track."

Denis Symes (MYC-63): "The TN was and is justifiably proud of being Airborne in a segregated military. They served with distinction and, in so doing, helped integrate the military."

"If we do not confront false claims and they become accepted history, I'm afraid that the FS history of developing smokejumping, timber jumping, protective equipment, air cargo operations and techniques, etc. will be lost. Frankly, I value FS Smokejumper history more than I do revisionist history, even in today's climate of political correctness."

Ron Thoreson (CJ-60): "Chuck - what a great issue of the jumper magazine (Jan. 2015). You worked your tush off on this one, didn't you? It's indeed important to get the history right. After 75 years, I think the Forest Service and the military probably didn't know the real history and sought the simplest reconstruction for a plausible story. Thanks for all the work you've done for so many years to keep the true jumper story alive. Great job that you and KG have done."

Rich Grandalski (RDD-64): "Your recent articles on Pioneer Smokejumpers, First Actual Forest Service Fire Jump (1940), and Smokejumper History-Don't Ask the Forest Service were excellent. I think your articles need to be distributed to historians and the media so history is not distorted or changed by misinformation or distortion of the truth."



Ken Hessel (MYC-58): "Wanted to tell you that you did a fantastic job on the last issue of *Smokejumper*. It's a good thing you are there to monitor the USFS and keep them from re-writing history. I can't believe they have clueless representatives (spokesmen/women) talking to media people about something they know nothing about, and have not taken the time and effort to research the subject matter. Keep up the good work."

Don Mathis (MSO-54): "I just finished devouring the last issue of *Smokejumper* magazine. Thank you for producing a historic document about the project. My professional training is in historiography, and I thoroughly enjoyed reading the background you so ably reported."

"As I read the last issue of the *Smokejumper*, many memories flooded back of my time as a jumper. My wife and I have continued our association with the Forest Service by doing volunteer work on historic site restorations and hosting at Forest Service visitors' centers. We remain physically active and have had many adventures in years of service in Eastern Europe and projects that have taken us to all continents of the world, even Antarctica."

Stan Cohen (Museum of Mountain Flying): "Just got the latest issue and read your comments on smokejumping etc. mistakes, even from Tidwell. This kind of historical nonsense drives me crazy, and I see more and more watching the history and military channels. It has become a hobby now to catch mistakes that I happen to know something about. Anxious to read about all the original guys."

Davis Perkins (NCSB-72) was recently awarded "Signature Member" status by the Board of Directors of the Oil Painters of America. This prestigious award is only given to a few individuals a year under a highly selective process.

Davis is doing an oil painting honoring 75 years of Smokejumping for the National Reunion in July. It will be auctioned at the Reunion. Prints of this painting will also be available through the NSA. Even though the USFS is unaware of it, early smokejumper operations played an important part in the development of the US Army Airborne Program.

Now smokejumping might be contributing to another "pioneer" military program.

In Oct. 2014, Major Jennifer Snow contacted me, via the NSA website, seeking input on a Dept. of Defense project integrating women into the Army's Special Operations teams. I forwarded a potential contact and had almost forgotten about the inquiry.

Last week (Jan. 2015) I got the following reply from Major Snow:

"Chuck - I just wanted to drop you a quick note of thanks. We got some great feedback from the smokejumper team to help round out our data in integrating women into the army special operations team. Currently the first women ranger school participants are getting lined up - close to 300 applicants, but they can only take 160 this year. We are very excited to see how this progresses. In particular, the in-depth feedback from **Lisa Allen** (NIFC-03) was extremely helpful to our physical fitness/injury analysis, mixed team interactions and operations in the field, and the establishment of gender neutral standards/job based standards.

"Thank you again for helping me to make contact with the right folks. The Naval Post Graduate School and the Defense Analysis Department sincerely appreciate the collaboration with the BLM on this project!"

In **Jack Demmon's** (MSO-50) column "Blast From The Past," he recounts historic smokejumper articles from the early 40s, mainly from the *Missoulian*. One such article from 1945 recounts a fire call that came in at 0900. Even though **Dick Johnson** had to stop and pick up a Ranger at Moose Creek, there were jumpers on the fire by 1100, and the fire was "dead out" by that evening. It took two days for the jumpers to hike out to Moose Creek, so you can get an idea of how isolated the fire was in the forest. Wouldn't it be great to get back to quick Initial Attack?

In a note with his annual donation addressed to NSA President **Jim Cherry** (MSO-57) from **Tommy Roche** (WYS-02): "I am the jumper who lived in Long Beach, NY, during hurricane Sandy. I can't tell you how much it meant to have had the help from the NSA after that devastation (NSA Good Samaritan Fund). A bright spot in my life was meeting with **Bob Reid** (MSO-57) down in Florida. Lifted my spirits up considerably since my brother was deploying for his 4th time to Afghanistan."

US Embassy: On January 22, 2015, Chargé d'affaires W. Patrick Murphy honored **Pisidhi Indradat** (Associate Life Mbr), a Thai civilian who helped the U.S. military during the Vietnam War, in a ceremony hosted by the U.S. Embassy and attended by the National

League of Families of American Prisoners and Missing in Southeast Asia. In 1963, Pisidhi, along with American **Gene DeBruin** (MSO-59), was captured in Laos where he was imprisoned. After several failed attempts at escape, he ultimately escaped after a rescue was successfully implemented on January 7, 1967. Since his escape, Pisidhi has continued to assist the U.S. POW/MIA mission to account for the missing and to repatriate recoverable remains of those who died during the Vietnam War. His efforts have been instrumental in resolving multiple cases.

In the Jan/Feb issue of *Montana Magazine*, there is an article about the Monture Guard Station cabin in the Blackfoot Valley. Shortly afterwards, **Hank Brodersen** (MSO-54) sent me a copy of a letter that he sent to the magazine. It tells of a group of smokejumpers in 1954 that went to that Guard Station and replaced the old shingle roof. Hank, from 61 years after the fact, tries to ID some of the jumpers from photos: **Jack Haase** (MSO-54), **Jack Cromer** (MSO-54), **Cedric Blackwell** (MSO-54), **Larry Anderson** (MSO-54) and **Ray Carter** (MSO-54). If you were among that group, you might want to touch bases with Hank at the National Reunion in July.

Lewiston Tribune Feb. 8, 2015: **Bill Bull** (MYC-64) and his wife, Bonnie, will be honored during a reception at the First Church of the Nazarene on their 50th wedding anniversary. Bill jumped at McCall 1964-68, retired from the Lewiston Police Department after 22 years as a lieutenant, and became a pastor of two Nazarene churches in the state of Washington.

Harry L. Cummings (MSO-46) just turned 92 in May. Harry, who lives in Orofino, Idaho, retired from the USFS in 1980. He was with the 101st Airborne in WWII and jumped at Normandy, Market Garden in Holland, and was in the Battle of the Bulge. Harry received two Purple Hearts during his service.

Eric Paieri (MYC-92): "I just received my current issue of *Smokejumper* magazine and am always excited to dig into it and see what is going on past and present. I would like to commend you and everyone involved with the magazine on the wonderful job being done to keep us linked to the Smokejumper World."

Bob Derry (MSO-43): "It was great to read about my brothers (April 2015 *Smokejumper*). Super job!"

Bill Fogg (son of Pioneer Smokejumper pilot Bob Fogg): "I really enjoyed reading the tribute to the Pioneer Smokejumper Pilots, including Dad. That was a very nice article and many thanks to you and the *Smokejumper* magazine staff for publishing this article and pictures."

Ron Siple (MYC-53): "What a great job you did on the April SJ magazine. Really enjoyed it!"

Paul Nicholas (MSO-42): "I enjoy reading the quarterly magazines. I remember **Frank Derry** (MSO-40) putting on a parachute and strapping himself to the wing strut of the Trimotor to take moving pictures of us during our practice jumps. When we landed, he found out he forgot to take off the lens cover during the flight. I imagine some timber cruiser found the camera years later in the forest where Frank threw it.

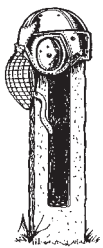
"I'm a veteran of WWII and Korea. Was in an Air-Sea Rescue unit and did assignments in the western U.S., Philippines and Japan. Retired out of the Air Force in 1964."

John Manley (CJ-62): "Greetings, Chuck. I recently caught up with my mail and found your package with

the Life Member pin and cap. Thanks very much for your thoughtful consideration. It is a wonderful organization, populated with guys and girls proud of the 'best job they ever had.'"

Major Boddicker (MSO-63): "The April issue of Smokejumper arrived yesterday. Excellent! Agree enthusiastically with your view of the USFS's attempt to re-write smokejumper history, regardless of their 'intent.' Credit should be placed where it is due and in direct proportion to whom it is due."

Mike Apicello (CJ-78) retired December 12, 2014. He and his wife, Joanne, are living in Brookings, OR. You can reconnect with him at PO Box 911 or 541-469-4254.



Off The List

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

Chuck Sheley
10 Judy Lane
Chico, CA 95926

Charles A. Robinson (Redding '77)

Charlie died September 23, 2014, at his home in Bear Valley Springs, California. He grew up in Lebec, CA, and attended Bakersfield High School. Charlie started working with the USFS on the Mt. Pinos District, Los Padres NF, before joining the Marines in 1967 and serving one tour in Vietnam. He returned to the Los Padres after the service and was an engine foreman at Gold Hill and assistant foreman on Chuchupate Helitack. Charlie jumped at Redding during the 1977 season.

Allen J. Moyer (Missoula '43)

Allen died December 20, 1990, in Deer Creek, Oklahoma. He grew up in that area, attended Northern Oklahoma Jr. College, and later transferred to Bethel College in Kansas. He was one of the few Civilian Public Service Smokejumper to jump all three years that the CPS jumpers handled operations out of Missoula.

Allen served on local school boards and was involved in raising sheep in the Deer Creek area. He was a member of the Mennonite Church and served on the board of directors of his local church.

Charles W. Burk (Missoula '47)

Chuck, 92, died January 13, 2015, in Sequim,

Washington. After attending a year at Augustana College in Sioux Falls, SD, he enlisted in the Navy where he served on the USS California and the USS Cleveland during WWII.

After the war he went to the University of Montana where he received his degree in Forest Management. Chuck briefly worked for Weyerhaeuser before joining the Forest Service where he had a 33-year career in Northern California and Montana. He retired in 1985 and moved to Sequim with his wife. Chuck jumped at Missoula for the 1947 and 1948 seasons.

Douglas L. Conrady (Missoula '63)

Doug died January 26, 2015, after battling non-Hodgkin's Lymphoma and Parkinson's disease. He graduated from the University of Montana and jumped at Missoula the 1963 and 1965 seasons. After graduation Doug spent 30 years with the phone company in Montana and ended up living in Clancy.

He was a skilled leather worker, arrow maker and outdoorsman whose family made the Bob Marshall Wilderness their second home.

Carl B. Shaver (McCall '52)

Carl died January 25, 2015, at his home in Loomis, CA, after a 15-year battle with Parkinson's disease. He jumped at McCall 1952-55 and Idaho City in 1956.

NSA Good Samaritan Fund

Contributions

Contributions since the previous publication of donors April 2015

Donor

In Memory/Honor of

Lynn Biddison	Gar Thorsrud MSO-46)
Chris Sorensen (Assoc)	Jedidah Lusk (FBX-10)
Nancy Jett	Gar Thorsrud (MSO-46)
Linda/George Vensel	Gar Thorsrud (MSO-46)
Brad Willard (MSO-58)	John Rolf (MSO-57)
Jane Wall	Gar Thorsrud (MSO-46)
J.L. Scott (MYC-48)	Gar Thorsrud (MSO-46)
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Todd/Martha Watkins	Gar Thorsrud (MSO-46)
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Squad VI	Bert Tanner, Willie von Bracht, Steve Walker (MSO-68)
Ron Siple (MYC-53).....	Stan Tate (MYC-53)
Alton Wagon	Jay Anderson (MYC-53)
Jane Berger	Gar Thorsrud (MSO-46)
Sierra Pacific Airlines	

Total funds disbursed to smokejumpers and families since 2004—\$55,340

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

Carl began his newspaper career as advertising director for the Idaho Statesman, then after 10 years joined the Sun Telegram in San Bernardino, CA. He then moved north and became Senior VP of Marketing for the San Francisco Newspaper Agency, retiring in 1988. After retiring, Carl formed his own media management business, CBS Associates.

Gerald L. Fuller (Fairbanks '65)

Gerry died October 9, 2013. He graduated from the University of New Hampshire in 1967 and was the

captain of the UNH basketball team. Gerry fought fire in Montana and Alaska before he rookied at Fairbanks in 1965. He taught school in Fairbanks for a couple years and also worked as Recreation Director for the labor union during the oil boom of the late 60s.

After a stint in Texas in construction, Gerry moved to Monument, Colorado, where he ran a drywall business for many years.

Jerrald E. Giles (McCall '56)

Jerry died August 10, 2014, in Grass Valley, Cali-

fornia. He graduated from the University of Idaho in 1959 and earned his Masters Degree in 1973. Jerry's 20-year career in the Marine Corps began in 1959 where he rose to the rank of Lt. Colonel. He served three tours in Vietnam where he earned the Silver Star, two Bronze Stars, the Navy Commendation Medal and a Purple Heart. While in Vietnam from September 1966 through July 1967, he commanded Kilo Company, 3rd Battalion, 9th Marines, 3rd Marine Division.

Jerry finally retired in 1998 to Grass Valley. He jumped at McCall 1956-59. Jerry was buried at Arlington National Cemetery in February 2015.

Roary Murchison (Redding '57)

Dr. Roary A. Murchison Jr., an emergency room physician who helped found three occupational medical clinics, died at his Woodland Hills, California, home August 27, 1990. He was 52. A native of Alabama, Roary graduated from Ohio State University College of Medicine in the early 1960s and later served as a doctor on a U.S. Army Special Forces A-Team during the Vietnam War. He worked as an emergency room physician in Chino, CA, before coming to Woodland Hills in 1980.

Roary was one of the founders of the California Occupational Medical Clinics, which had offices in Canoga Park, Saugus and Rancho Cucamonga. In the early 1980s, he was on the staff at Tarzana Regional Medical Center and Henry Mayo Newhall Memorial Hospital. Roary jumped at Redding 1957 through 1962. *Thanks to Joe Lord (MSO-56) for the obit information.*

Charles C.R. Stelling (Missoula '48)

Chuck died February 24, 2015, in Missoula. He graduated from the University of Montana after serving in the Navy during WWII. After starting work in the car dealership business in Polson, he began working in the real estate business in Missoula over a 37-year period.

Chuck was an avid outdoorsman and was involved in the outfitting and guide business. He jumped at Missoula during the 1948 season.

Glen B. Youngblood (McCall '47)

Glen, 82, died July 4, 2010, in Boise. He joined the Navy in 1945 after completing high school in Council, Idaho. Glen graduated from the University of Idaho with a degree in Forestry and jumped at McCall during the 1947-48 seasons. He worked for Boise Payette Lumber Company until 1962 when he and his wife, Melba, bought and ran the Cascade Star News.

Jay R. Anderson (McCall '53)

Jay died March 2, 2015, in his home in Ogden, Utah. Jay graduated from Ogden High School and attended the University of Wyoming before graduating in Civil Engineering from Utah State University. He founded Great Basin Engineering, a consulting civil engineering and land surveying firm in 1959. Today that business continues as Great Basin Engineering in Ogden and Anderson, Wahlen and Associates in Salt Lake City.

His passion later in life was big game hunting. He was the first person in the State of Utah to successfully take each of the "Once in a Lifetime" Big Game animals in Utah through the draw, accomplishing this in 1998.

He helped found the Bastian Ranch Cooperative Wildlife Management Unit in 1993. He loved being the operator of this property and providing hunting opportunities for people and especially spending time on the mountain with his children and grandchildren.

Jay jumped at McCall during the 1953 season.

Jerry Vice (Redding '69)

Jerry, 72, died February 27, 2015. He started his career with the USFS on the Plumas N.F. in 1960. After his retirement in 1995, he lived in Redding to be close to Shasta Lake, where he enjoyed his houseboat and fishing. Jerry jumped at Redding in 1969-70 and was part of the retread program.

Alan O. Inglis (Missoula '45)

Al, 91, died February 14, 2015, in Lakewood, Colorado. He served with the CPS-103 smokejumpers in Missoula during the 1945 season. Al graduated from Earlham College in 1949 and Yale Divinity School in 1952. Al served Congregational churches in North Dakota, where he flew to five churches every Sunday. Moving to Colorado in 1967, he worked for the Federal War on Poverty until 1970.

An additional note from his daughter Carol: "Dad served a year with the Smokejumpers out of Missoula, Montana, before returning to college and becoming ordained. Although many people considered much of the way he went through life as different from the ordinary, this particular experience was probably the highlight of his life, next to his marriage to Margaret Tollefson. It led to his acquisition of a Piper Cub and service as a flying pastor of five little churches in North Dakota in the 1950s, and culminated in his ownership of an ultralight plane and home landing strip when he was unable to obtain a regular pilot's license in his '70s and '80s.

"He celebrated his 90th birthday by jumping from

a plane (tandem with a professional). He admitted to not particularly caring for the long 'free fall' but was once again thrilled by the parachute, despite a growing wind from an approaching storm."

Kenneth A. Cavin (Pilot)

Ken, 87, died February 3, 2015 in Dayton, Nevada. He obtained his pilot's license in 1948 and flew for the Forest Service as a Tanker, Lead Plane and smokejumper pilot. Ken was based at NCSB from 1963-1977, where he lived with his wife and four children in the little trailer across the runway.

Ken flew the Doug and Twin Beach and dropped over 2000 jumpers. He went on to fly lead plane pilot in Redmond from 1977-81.

Ken flew many different types of airplanes: including DC-3, DC-4, N3N Biplanes, Twin Beech, Cessnas, Pipers, Bonanza, B-26, T-34, Aero Commander, and his Navion, in which he landed on the Loup Loup Highway in 1973 with jumper **Jim Detro** (NCSB-67) after a prop failure. In 1963 he flew what is now known as "The Sentimental Journey" B-17 when it had been modified to drop retardant on forest fires.

Fred W. Rungee (Missoula '45)

Fred died March 27, 2015, at the age of 93. One of the few remaining CPS-103 jumpers, he was immensely proud of his service to his country as a conscientious objector with the fledgling smokejumpers of the Civilian Public Service program during WWII. He diligently worked toward a world at peace throughout his entire life.

As a woodsman, Fred qualified as a true Alaskan. He was an adventurer who looked comfortable in a canoe or kayak, on snowshoes or a motorcycle, helicopter, or Oldsmobile. More often than not, he could be found in the woods, on foot with his double bit axe, his model 70 Winchester hunting rifle and a 60-pound pack. He was a true leader by example who, after a brief residency in Montana, made his home in Alaska where he worked for the Bureau of Land Management as the Fire Management Officer of the Glennallen District, responsible for all forest fire control in that area—about the size of New York State.

Of his more than 70 years in Alaska, he resided primarily in the town of Glennallen. Upon retirement in 1978, Fred moved to the Slana area to a cabin that he himself built two and a half miles from the nearest road. Packing all the materials and even a massive wood stove he needed for the cabin on foot, he did concede using a buckboard to move in his piano.

Hal A. Samsel (Missoula '49)

Hal died April 2, 2015, just two weeks after the passing of his wife of 64 years, Betty. His Dad was District Ranger on the Seely Lake District, and he started fighting fires at age 14. Hal is well known in jumper circles having stayed with the job from 1949 until his retirement in 1980. Brothers **Bill** (MSO-61) and **Kirk** (MSO-60) were also jumpers.

After graduating from high school, he rookied in 1949 before joining the Marine Corps. Hal returned to jumping in 1952 and was hired full-time at Missoula in 1957. During the last 10 years of his career, he was the parachute loft foreman, retiring in 1980.

In a 2004 interview with *Smokejumper*, Hal said he was detailed to just about all of the bases, at one time or another, during his career. He told about one time 16 Missoula jumpers were sent down to Medford. It was the summer the airstrip at Cave Junction was closed for repairs. Being in Medford, there was no mess hall. They were on their own for food, and their money ran out quickly. They prayed for fires so they could get something to eat. The welfare fund sent down \$200 that didn't go too far with 16 jumpers. Hal said it was a good thing there was a peach orchard nearby.

Hal had seen many changes in smokejumping during his tenure on the job. There were many veterans returning from WWII in his rookie class as well as men like **Fred Brauer** (MSO-41) and **Fred Barnowsky** (MSO-42), who jumped before going off to war and were returning to that job. He had seen the jumpers go from the college types, who jumped and went on to another life, to the career jumpers.

After retiring, Hal and his wife lived in Missoula for several years while they were completing their cabin at Flathead Lake, where they lived until their passing.

Robert H. Painter (Cave Junction '44)

Bob passed away on January 28, 2015, in Grant, Michigan, at the age of 93. He grew up in New England and after graduating from Earlham College in Richmond, Indiana, he was drafted into the Civilian Public Service as a Conscientious Objector during WWII.

After smokejumper training in Missoula, he joined the jumpers at Cave Junction where he chalked up 15 jumps, the most memorable being north of Lake Chelan, WA. Bob returned and jumped the 1945 season at McCall.

After discharge in 1946, he completed Medical School in Philadelphia. He practiced general medicine until 1987 in several rural towns in Michigan. In addition to his medical practice, he served on the town council, as a Trustee at the local Community College.