

THE NATIONAL SMOKEJUMPER
ASSOCIATION

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APRIL 2006

SMOKEJUMPER

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Message from the President



by Doug Houston
(Redmond '73)
PRESIDENT

AS MY TWO-YEAR TERM IS winding down, I would like to say it has been very rewarding, offering a variety of topics, issues and contacts. Examples of a few of these within the last two weeks have been:

1. Contact by an adventure-film company in England wanting to have their star become a rookie smokejumper for a production segment.
2. Finalizing donations to the

- USFS Museum from the NSA.
3. Communication with the Bozeman Watch Company who is selling a very nice smokejumper watch from which we get a percentage of the sale.
4. Discussion with the Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation attempting to coordinate joint trails assistance or projects.
5. Approving investments recommended by our NSA investment counselor.
6. Answering emails from potential smokejumper candidates.
7. Sending out letters of appreciation to our newest Life Members.

One really great thing, in addition to these, is that jumpers I haven't seen or heard from in years have contacted me. All in all, it has been very rewarding. My term will end June 30 and John Twiss will assume the position of President. So until the next magazine, the door is yours, there is 100 yards of drift, and the whole world is a jump spot. Get Ready! 🍄

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Benefits include:

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He Started the Smokejumper Program in McCall

An Interview With Stewart S. “Lloyd” Johnson (McCall ’43)

by Leo Cromwell (Idaho City ’66)

Stewart or Lloyd? He does not care what you call him, but he should be remembered as “The Father of Region 4 Smokejumping.” Lloyd worked 23 seasons with the Forest Service. In 1943, he volunteered to be in charge of a new experimental firefighting program called Smokejumping. Only a few years earlier Evan Kelley, the Region 1 Regional Forester, said, “All parachute jumpers are more or less crazy and just a little bit unbalanced, otherwise they wouldn’t be engaged in such a hazardous undertaking.”

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Smokejumper base abbreviations:

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

Three years later in 1946, as the war came to an end, Lloyd hired McCall’s first non-CPS smokejumper crew consisting mainly of returning veterans. Lloyd felt that he worked with the finest group of men that could possibly be put together during his ten years with the smokejumpers. What he did and why he left, this is his story.

Raised In McCall

Stewart Standidge Johnson was born in McCall, Idaho, on June 2, 1916. He grew up in McCall and loved the outdoors. Skiing, firefighting, and smokejumping were a very important part of his life. Stewart’s nickname, “Lloyd,” was given to him by his father. Later in his life, he was called “The Whip” by his smokejumper crew. This title is said to have originated from Bus Bertram (MYC-47), who on a very long packout led by Lloyd said, “Even a government mule gets a break, Whip.” He has always enjoyed skiing and was named “The World’s Smallest Ski Jumper” on the 1925 McCall Winter Carnival official pin. Lloyd can still be found skiing on the slopes of Brundage Mountain every winter.

Forest Service Career

In 1930 at the age of 14, Lloyd began working for the Forest Service while in high school. He was hired as the custodian at the Forest Supervisor’s Office. Emptying and cleaning spittoons permanently cured Lloyd of ever using tobacco products. Later that summer he worked for the district fixing telephone lines, trails and other types of maintenance work.

When he was 16 he received his first full-time forest service position with packers George Anderson and Harry Fritzer. As the camp tender, he was in charge of setting up camp and preparing meals. When fires broke out during this 1932 season, he made his first appearance on a fireline. Lloyd had volunteered to be a much needed water boy. His job was to hike to the nearest stream or lake and fill a 5-gallon pack with water and return it to the fire line for the crew. Walking around the fire offering the crew water, Lloyd learned a lot about fire fighting procedures. Lloyd was fired three times that summer by a Regional Forest Supervisor from Ogden named Floyd Godden. Godden had spotted Lloyd on the fire line and knew he had to be too young to be fighting fires.

Godden approached the young, hard working youth and asked, “How old are you?”

Lloyd replied, "I don't know."

Godden said, "Well, you're not old enough. Collect your pay and find a ride back to where you belong."

Lloyd started to leave, then ducked out of site and reported back to his foreman, who said, "Disappear kid, we need you up here, so whenever you see old Floyd, just go the other way."

He worked on and helped build lookouts that do not exist on today's Payette National Forest. Some of the lookouts he worked on were Blackmare, Eagle Rock, and Teapot Dome.

Later, before taking on the smokejumping project, he worked as an alternate ranger on the New Meadows District. He also spent time in the Supervisor's Office working alongside the Forest Dispatcher, Harold "Slim" Vassar.

How It All Began In 1943

"No one else was crazy enough to do it," is how Lloyd answers the question about why he took on the challenge of starting a new smokejumper firefighting unit. "It was strictly an experimental program and it had to be voluntary. A lot of Forest Service personnel thought that it would not work. I was chosen because I knew firefighting and I believed that this new idea would get firefighters to the line faster without the long walks.

"I can tell you how the McCall Base got started. I got into it even before they started the smokejumpers. They developed a seat that would work out of a Travelaire. You would sit in the seat and pull on a lever and you would go out the bottom of the plane and then you would pull your ripcord. That was never approved, but I volunteered for the first deal. When they decided to give it an experimental try here in Region 4, I volunteered for this great challenge. **John Ferguson** (MYC-43) and I were both working for the Forest Service here in McCall, so they chose the two of us to go to training in Seeley Lake, Montana. **Frank Derry** (MSO-40) headed up the training. So Ferguson, the conscientious objectors and I trained together. We then returned to McCall along with three conscientious objectors: **Lester Gahler** (MYC-43), **Jerry Hofer** (MYC-43), and **Keith Utterback** (MYC-43). After the training was completed, I was placed in charge of the new program."

During the first three years of smokejumping at McCall, the crew consisted of two Forest Service employees and the rest were CPS (Civilian Public Service or Conscientious Objectors) jumpers. Lloyd had a lot of respect for the conscientious objectors, even though he did not agree with them for not going into the military service. He understood it was the way they were raised and what they believed in. The CPS crew would do anything they were asked to do in McCall in those early years. That first year the CPS jumpers were not prepared for the sub-zero temperatures. He had to "beg, borrow, and steal" for clothes to get them through the long winter months. The CPS program was run by their own organization and, after training, they received their jumper base assignment. In 1944, McCall received sixteen of these jumpers and expanded to thirty-five for the final year of the program in 1945.

"We had absolutely nothing to work with here in McCall. With no money, everything that we got was taken out of the forest funds, and they handed out money like you would to your kids as they were growing up. Our base was started on the forest property above an old nursery building that was used for raising trees. It was abandoned at that time, so we took over this building. A cook shack was set up in one corner of the building. It had an upper story that we set the smokejumpers up in. A parachute loft was constructed to inspect and dry the chutes. We had a pulley system set up to the apex of the building to pull the chutes up for inspection. John Ferguson and I were the only trained riggers the first three years.

"The building was a portable military building. When the Great Depression came along, they had to have buildings to house the CCC (Civilian Conservation Corps). So then they shipped in these portable military buildings; they were molded together in sections.

"Up the hill we built a barracks with a basement in it. When the forest supervisor, Jimmy Farrel, would leave town, we would slip out there and build another building because he would never have authorized it if he knew about it. When he came back he would say, 'Well, what's this?' It was a kitchen.

"In 1946 the war was over and we hired local boys and veterans to replace the CPS jumpers who provided jumper manpower during the war. We built a baseball field near the jump tower. I hired **Wayne Webb**, **Kenny Roth**, and **Dale Fickle**, who were great athletes, and they wanted the baseball field. Others hired that year included: **Smokey Stover**, **Bob Caldwell**, **Bruce Egger**, **Wally Henderson**, **Ray Mansisor**, **Ace Nielsen**, and brothers, **Ralph and Paul Wilde**. We went and leveled off the field behind the base and got the equipment by the 'beg, borrow, or steal' method because we had no money. If I needed a dollar, I would have to go over the hill and get down on my hands and knees. We had a great team until the fire season got hot and heavy. I encouraged the baseball because it kept the guys in shape. I must say some of the guys were better ballplayers than workers."

The First Smokejumper Buildings In McCall

"We got most of the buildings from the CCC camps at Lake Fork Creek, near McCall and French Creek, up river from Riggins. We would go out and tear them down and reassemble them back at McCall. The last of the buildings we got from Gowen Field in Boise. They were already torn apart and lying out in the sun. They were warped and we had a heck of a time putting them back together, but we had to have them. Each panel was about eight foot wide and we bolted them together. They had 2x4 frames and we put the buildings up and finished them inside. We put up wallboard and covered them with gallons and gallons of paint. We used the spray gun on everything we had; that's what held the buildings together. We painted the floors gray and built lockers for each individual jumper.

"At the food cache each jumper made up his own food



L-R: Bob Webber (MSO-62), Lloyd Johnson (MYC-43), Leo Cromwell (IDC-66) December, 2005. (Courtesy Bob Webber)

bag for the fire. Everybody did not like the same things, so they chose what they wanted to take to the fire. You know, everybody does not like beans, so you didn't take beans if you did not like them.

"Everything was set up in camp. We had a roster and when we got a fire the top guys went and when you came off the fire you returned to the bottom to rotate up again. You worked your way up the roster until you reached the top and when you got a fire, then away you went. We did not have a fire buzzer at first because we didn't have anyone to ring the buzzer. We waited for a call from dispatch over the hill at the supervisor's office informing us that we had a fire. When we got a call we suited up in our ready room and then got into a pickup that had seats along the sides of the bed. Jumpers were all suited and chuted up and went right to the airport and got into the plane, and we were off in around 15 minutes."

The First Jumps From McCall

"The first jump was made from the Travelair with Penn Stoor as pilot and I was the spotter. It was on Capt John's Creek near Riggins on August 14, 1943, on the Idaho Forest. John Fuguson and Lester Gahler made the jump using 30-foot diameter Eagle parachutes.

"The second jump of the 1943 fire season was on August 27. I was jumping with Jerry Hofer and Keith Utterback, and John Ferguson was the spotter. The fire was near Sloan's Point in Paddy Flat, only a few miles southeast of McCall.

"The wind was really blowing, and I managed to get my canopy draped over the top of the tallest fir tree in Idaho. We carried letdown ropes that were only sixty feet in length. I looked down and I knew that with 60 feet of letdown rope. I could not get even close to the ground. The fire was burning right next to the tree I was in, and I felt like 'a pig on a stick.' I unhooked my canopy and took off all my jump gear and threw it out so that the only thing I had left was my rope. I climbed down through the limbs and tied off on the lowest one and dropped the rope.

It came within 15 feet of the ground.

"I slowly worked my way down this big sloping fir. There were little clumps of broken branches that made it difficult to work around. I was doing fine until I ran out of branches and I swung out. Now all I had between the ground and myself was my rope. I started down the rope and the friction burned my hands through my gloves. Today I can still remember the feeling as it burned through my gloves into my flesh. Boy, were they smoking! I got down to the end of my rope and just cut loose and did a good roll. Fortunately, outside of my rope-burned hands, I had no problem but the fire was crowning right next to me, so I was naturally a little excited. We got on the ground and soon controlled the fire."

McCall's report of the fire jump says that Dick Johnson was the pilot of the Travelaire. The fire was running fast and snags were falling. The three smokejumpers and a Paddy Flat guard held the fire in check until a crew of 15 firefighters arrived several hours later and prevented a major fire.

The 1946 Season

In the 1946 season, the McCall Unit had forty-three jumpers in the first year after the release of the CPS jumpers. Forty were in their first year, as most of the new recruits were veterans of the war. Lloyd made up rules with the help of the new crew and appointed new squadleaders from their midst. Weight limits were established from 120 to 180 pounds. "If you are over 180 pounds you will hit too hard and if you weigh under 120 you will drift too far," Lloyd informed the recruits. An age limit was placed at 40 years of age after which it was believed the jumper was "over the hill."

Lloyd preferred to hire the college students instead of the "career jumpers." The students came back from college when the fire season needed them and returned to college as the season came to an end. He soon had doctors, lawyers, schoolteachers, forest service leaders and other professional people as part of his earlier crews.

July 3, 1946, was the date of the first Forest Service smokejumper fatality in the nation. First-year jumper, **Lester Lycklama** (MYC-46), was killed after being hit in the head by a limb from a tree that he and rookie **John Hennessey** (MYC-46) were attempting to fall with a crosscut. Lloyd jumped the rescue along with four others. He administered blood plasma to Lester, who later died in the Council Hospital.

His Decision To Leave The Smokejumpers

Under the National Security Act of 1947, the Central Intelligence Agency was established and by 1949 the CIA went recruiting for candidates in the smokejumper organization. The CIA wanted smokejumpers because of their knowledge of jumping and surviving on the ground after the jump. One of the first people they were interested in was Lloyd Johnson. The CIA talked to Lloyd and he pledged his secrecy to the organization and never even told his wife of their interest in him. But the forest supervisor was informed when they contacted him to reach Lloyd and had discussed

the possibility of losing smokejumpers to the new organization.

Soon fellow Forest Service employees were telling Lloyd, "We hear you are leaving us to take a job with the CIA."

The FBI and the forest supervisor accused Lloyd of "letting the cat out of the bag" about the CIA. Lloyd was upset over becoming the "fall guy" and, along with a few other things, he felt like it was time to find a new career. He was not forced to quit but made the difficult decision on his own.

In the spring of 1953, after training his crew for the new fire season, Lloyd quit the Forest Service as he promised he would. Lloyd was a proud man and was very well respected by his crew. Wayne Webb wrote a letter that protested the way the Forest Service was treating Lloyd, and the rest of his loyal crew signed their support. Webb's letter is said to have cost him his chance of ever replacing Lloyd as the new Project Leader in McCall. Lloyd trained the 1953 crew and turned the job of managing the project over to **Reid Jackson** (MYL-49).

In 1953, after 23 years of working for the Forest Service,

Lloyd left and moved his family to Fruitland, Idaho, to begin his new career as an oil distributor for Westcott Oil. Lloyd had a very successful business career and life in Fruitland. He currently lives in the same house he bought in 1953, and his home contains a treasure of smokejumper history. This year on June 2, he will celebrate his 90th birthday with his family, friends, and smokejumpers.

The story of Stewart S. "Lloyd" Johnson has been preserved by the Heritage Program of the Payette National Forest, written in 2003 by Richard H. Holm. Lloyd's knowledge and contributions to smokejumping have been preserved on video by hours of interviews by **Bob Webber** (MSO-62). Bob has captured Lloyd's life and his memories of the forest workers, pilots, and smokejumpers so that we will never forget them. Lloyd Johnson is the person that made the smokejumping experiment work in Region 4. He truly is the "The Father of Region 4 Smokejumping." 🌲

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Wild Mustang

My first "horse" ride on a wild Mustang; at 15 years of age
The "old man" led her out of stable to a gravel country lane.
As I saddled up on that open plain the sun shown bright and hot
All ready now - I jerked her gear - and tires spewed dust and gravel.

She lurched and bucked and ran amuck on that shift to second gear.
My Dad held on from his starboard seat; as sweat poured mixed with fear.

Those horses "Henry" put under the hood could sure get up and thunder
Still, my Dad, he talked me through; *"steer left - control her rudder."*
Soon clutch worked smooth as horses purred across the rolling range
So proud was I to harness the power of that sixty-eight Mustang.

We drove on home for a bite to eat; where the "old man" did proclaim;
"You're almost grown so have a beer to celebrate your fame
We'll soon head back for the second act - and polish up your game."

But on the road; seemed nothing worked from gas to clutch and pedal
That's when my Dad said, *"Just pull over and let this lesson settle."*

As he took the wheel I won't forget his words on drink and driving
It's just too bad in this day and age they'd throw him in the slammer
For teaching me - first hand - the effects; of alcohol and driving.

Karl Brauneis-Forest Ranger

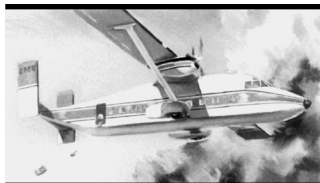
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To my Dad - Harry Brauneis

May the fathers of our nation always be secure in
the right to train up their children using wisdom,
love, and a common sense rarely found in today's
book of law.

Karl is a member of the "Cowboy Poets of Wind River."



Sounding Off from the Editor



by **Chuck Sheley**
(Cave Junction '59)
MANAGING EDITOR

WHEN I SIT DOWN TO write my quarterly column, I usually hope I have an issue that comes to mind. Many times I will write about something completely foreign to smokejumping. Sometimes it's fire and fireline, sometimes it's teaching and coaching and sometimes it's life.

In my 41 years of coaching, I've worked with a lot of young people. Many have become my friends, and the student-teacher relationship is now more friend-to-friend. Two of my doctors, five head coaches against whom I compete, two smokejumper base managers, 22 smokejumpers, three Hotshot Superintendents, too many lawyers, my auto mechanic, the dealer from who I bought my car, many teachers, a couple restaurant owners and two of the associate editors of this magazine were my students. What a pleasure it is to still deal with these people in my later years. The smokejumper/teacher profession has to be the greatest job combo ever.

Sometimes I wonder if I dealt too harshly with my students. I was always known as a "strict" teacher. That can be translated that I had rules that needed to be followed and every

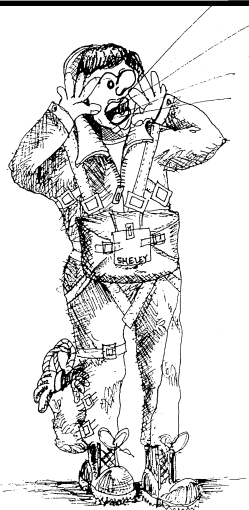
student was treated equally. Equally is a big task, but I tried.

I found myself training rookie smokejumpers in the summer and teaching junior high school students in the winter. Should I say that sometimes there was little difference? That would be wrong. The age and maturity was different, but the teaching methods overlapped.

At Cave Junction competition never stopped. If it was not on the volleyball court, the softball field, tree climbing, snag falling, running, packouts, it was the verbal dueling that never ceased on the work projects. Many of my physical training activities as a smokejumper squadleader came from my background as a P.E. instructor. Sometimes, as a teacher, I forgot that I was dealing with junior high school boys and treated them as smokejumpers. That happened one rainy, foggy December day.

I was absent the prior day for an Athletic Director's meeting and found a lengthy note from my substitute telling me how my "F" period had totally misbehaved during that day. "F Troop" was a difficult group to handle under any circumstances and, the next day, my objective was to drive into their little heads the fact that they needed to treat my substitute teacher the same as me. I know substitute teaching is the worst job in the world, but I needed to set some guidelines for these young guys. A class of 45 Jr. H.S. boys is always just a step away from a full riot. Their energy, could it be contained, would run the lights of Los Angeles for a night.

The next day I picked out 12 of the "usual suspects" and had the other instructors take the rest of my class. We walked out to the athletic fields in a light rain, while the others



went to the gym for that period. I lined them up and gave the "disappointed with them speech" and started the remaining 30 minutes of the period with non-stop movement.

"On the line. Sprint to the other line (20 yards) and back. On right leg, hop down and sprint back, crabwalk down and sprint back, bear walk down and sprint back."

Between each of these, there were push-ups. I told

them that I did not want their performance of the previous day to be repeated. Then I got into it and started to move into the smokejumper mode.

"Who's going to be the first to quit? You guys are all going to drop in five minutes. You'll never last. Really tough picking on the sub, wasn't it? Are you ready for more?"

One of the kids yelled out in a very loud voice, "Yes Sir!" For just a part of a second, that surprised me.

"What did you say?" I asked. At least ten of the twelve blew me back with a loud, "Yes Sir!"

There are those days, few and far between, when you are teaching that you reach into that area called the "zone." The class is in your hands; you are in control and firing on all cylinders and you never want the bell to ring. This was it!

The drizzle turned into a pretty steady rain. After a few more trips down and back with everyone now hustling at 100% so as not to be last, one of the kids slipped in the mud and went down. What the heck!

"Everybody, bear walk down and back."

By this time they were soaked and their gym clothes, hands and faces were muddy. I kept challenging them, and they shoved it back at me with a

louder “Yes Sir!” asking for all I could throw at them. The louder they got, the more I gave them. Instead of diminishing, the energy level on both sides grew to a near frenzy.

When the bell rang at the end of the period, I asked them if they were ready to go in. “No!” I looked at the twelve, soaked to the skin and muddy, suddenly realizing I would get at least that many phone calls from irate parents and wondering what had gotten into me. We had just fed off of each other for a

period, and I had to end it.

“To the showers and everyone had better have clean clothes tomorrow.”

Off they went to the locker room running like stripped-ass apes and entering at the back doors at warp speed.

The other 130 kids were in the midst of changing into their school clothes when “F Troop” hit the back doors. It was like a hurricane hit the locker room when they blew in covered with mud. The noise and

energy level went up twenty levels. The other kids wondered what had happened to these guys.

I did not get any phone calls from irate parents or letters to the principal for my actions that day. Wonder what they talked about at the dinner table that night? The next day I was deluged with questions from the other students, asking, “when could they have a ‘com-mando’ day?”

No fire story, just another day in life. 🦋

Lunch at The Ox

by Chuck Pickard (Missoula '48)

There was one place to eat lunch in Missoula in those days: the “Oxford,” where else. The “Ox” was located in the center of town, the main entrance on Higgins Ave. and the side entrance on Pine. On your left, as you entered, was an array of



Chuck Pickard (NSA file)

tobacco products to fit any habit. There were cigarettes of every brand, cut plugs, pouch tobacco, chewing tobacco, pipes, cigars, Copenhagen for the snooze chewers and Bull Durham for the roll-your-owners. To the right was an array of liquors to fill every need. As was popular in those days, there was an ample assortment of pints and half-pints. Popular brands such as Four Roses, Calverts, Wrestlers Socks, and even some rot gut brands. Adjacent was the stand-up bar, complete with brass rail and spittoons.

The lunch counter with about fifteen stools ran the length of the room on the left. During a busy period, it was not uncommon to have a few patrons standing behind you waiting for your seat. The food was quick and good.

The cooks and waiters were fresh out of logging camps. They were gruff speaking (when they spoke) and wore white pants, shirts and aprons. Tableware was heavy white plates, bowls and cups. A favorite on the menu was beef stew for six bits with all the crackers you could eat. Coffee was a dime. Tom, a logging camp “cookie” I came to know, often waited on me. I can hear him now yell to the cook, “Under the Bridge.” Shortly an order of beef stew came sliding down the counter.

Toward the rear of the lunch counter was a walk thru leading to the game room; a smoke-filled room of pool and poker tables. Many of the players were whiskey drinking “regulars.” Perish the thought of trying your luck.

Everywhere space allowed stood the noisy mechanical one-arm bandits, no lights, no cords, only a handle to spin the wheels of cherries, oranges and plums. They were noisy devils...along with the occasional brash language of a loser.

The frequent flyers at the Ox in those days comprised a mix of local shop keepers, cowboys, loggers, train crews and train tramps, forest service workers and more than a few smokejumpers. If you happened to be in town early, a breakfast of ham, eggs, hash browns, toast and coffee went for six bits. Good food and good memories. Last I looked, they had moved the lunch counter to the other side of the room. 🦋

Oxford – Post Script

by Bill Fogarty (Missoula '57)

I had the pleasure of helping prepare Chuck's Oxford article for publication. It brought back many fine memories from earlier years in Missoula. Even more – the memory of meeting long forgotten friends there

on Friday afternoon of the 2004 reunion and the breakfast get-togethers with more fine friends on both Saturday and Sunday.

Chuck's article gives a great physical picture of the Oxford. The OX is

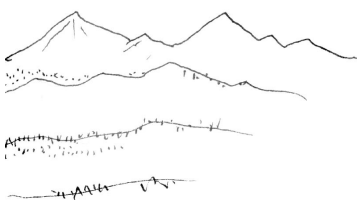
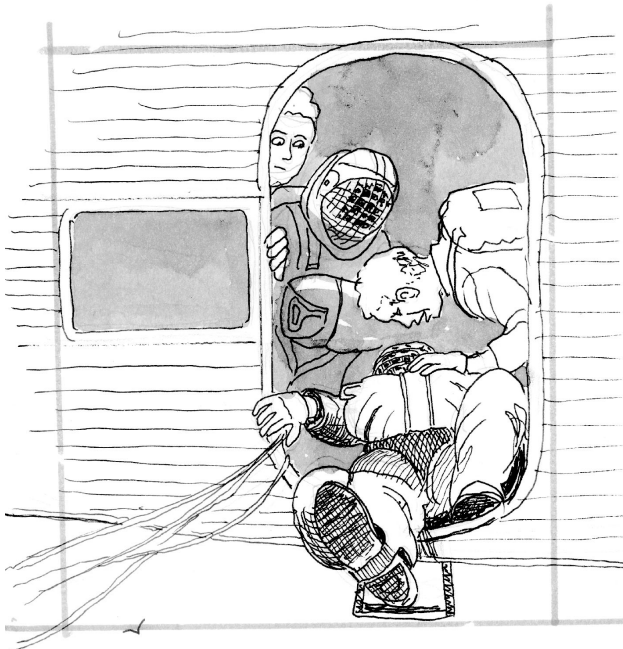
over 100 years old and has played a big part in the lives of 1000's of college kids, 100's of smokejumpers; not to mention the drunks, whores, bums, hippies, Indians, loggers, farmers, cowboys, trainmen, businessmen, etc. etc.

It is open 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Reservations would be foolishness. For years there was a shoe shine stand that was located on the back wall by the Pine St. entrance. No longer in use in the mid-50s, it served as a place for the old-timers to sit, chew the fat and watch the goings-on. I often wondered if at some future time I would be occupying one of those seats. A "specialty" of the house, the Ox Burger, was often served (in my day) almost raw with a big slice of onion. An Ox Burger with everything meant with onion, and slide the ketchup and mustard down the counter. Brains and eggs is still served, but with a new "sanitized" short order call. It used to be, "Lay two and gag." Yes, the cooks and waiters did wear white or "once-white." You could probably scrape two or three full meals off their aprons. Cooks could run the grill with a cigarette in their mouth and an inch of ash. Talk about suspense! Yes, the waiters seldom talked, and

when they did it was only to ask, "Does ya want white gravy or brown gravy on those hashbrowns/fries?" Yes, at busy times there often were three or more people waiting in line for your stool. It was not uncommon, especially after the bars closed and the crowd came in, for someone sitting at the counter to feel a polite tap on the shoulder and a needy soul asking, "Are you going to eat all that?" There were times I was so broke, I almost asked. What is hardest to describe was the SMELL. To me it ranks (no pun intended) right up there with new-mown hay, fresh baked bread, and a spring rain. The smell was bacon and liver and onions, whiskey and stale beer, smoke and spit from every conceivable tobacco product, whatever happened to be tracked in on the soles of boots, unwashed bodies and perfumed ladies, plus a few smells that emanated from somewhere in the back.

The OX has been written-up in just about every travel magazine published.

Once, only ladies of free spirit, co-eds, bag ladies, or working women dared to dine at the OX. Now that it has become trendy, one sees ladies of the day dining at the newly added tables. The menu has changed very little, but the prices have increased tremendously to reflect the socio-economic status of the tourists and the new and "improved" clientele. Now that Montana has gone "No Smoking" in public places, part of the SMELL will be missing. Maybe most of the old clientele will be missing also, and with that the rest of the SMELL. Perhaps there will eventually be ferns in the windows, watercress sandwiches, wine in fancy glasses and a new name - Oxford Bistro. There may even come the day when they will turn the OX into a museum and charge folks to see what things looked like before civilization. Wallace, Idaho, did that with the old brothels. They now charge \$5.00 to go upstairs and "look." Hells bells, in my day ...



(Courtesy J. Wissler)

"Your Static Line's Not Hooked Up!"

by Jim Wissler (Missoula '48)

It was July 1948 and my first practice jump. We took off in the Ford from the grass field near Camp Menard. I was the first jumper in my three-man group, and I put my foot out onto the step. It was hard to get your "logger" on that step in the 80+ mph air stream. Trying not to look down (God it was a long way!) and expecting a slap on the back at any minute, I was suddenly pulled back into the Ford. The spotter, bending over me, yelled into my facemask, "Your static line's not hooked up!"

Of course we had to go around again, and everything went well when the time came for my first jump. I must have been thinking of other things when we were told to "hook up." Like abject fear!

I often wonder what would have happened to this rookie had it not been for the watchful eyes of the jumpmaster. Later, I learned that the "old guy" who "saved" me was **Wag Dodge** (Missoula '41). Rest in peace, smokejumper. 🕊

The Contest

by Jason Greenlee (Redding '99)

All Division Zulu resources, this is Division Zulu. At 1700 hours, we will assemble at the staging area to hear the results of today's contest."

An hour later, handcrews, engines and tenders assembled, eager to hear "the judge's" results on the day's contest. The contest was to see who could locate and kill the most smokes on Zulu, which was in a mop-up phase. All day long, the crews and engines had been calling in their finds to Division Zulu, who had been keeping score. The promise was that the winner would get to watch all the losers do fifty pushups.

Unfortunately, Division Zulu had been consistent in only one aspect of the contest, and that was that Zulu was totally inconsistent. One minute, he would tell everyone that there were handicap points for old age; the next minute, he would grant bonus points for smokes in big slash piles. Where would it end? No one trusted him. Anything could happen.

And what else would you expect from a smokejumper when all smokejumpers are known to be liars and cheats?

But the crews on Zulu dug deep into their reserves. By the time Zulu cut off the contest so that he could "tally up the score," 238 smokes were reported. Everyone was beat. This was supposed to be mop-up! You were supposed to be laid-back in mop-up, but here everyone was running around like chickens with their heads cut off!

Zulu steamed up in his rented Jeep and jumped out. He was excited. He was late. People circled around the Jeep to hear who had earned the right to see everyone else do push-ups. Everyone suspected that it would be the South Dakota inmate crew DOC-4. This was DOC's home turf, they knew the area, and they were by far the best liars on Zulu.

"Gentlemen! Welcome to the grand announcement regarding the highly nebulous and, I might add, nefarious results of the annual Zulu spot fire search contest!"

This was met with approval from the crowd, which chorused, "Yeah!" "Good!" "About time!" "Get on with it."

"Now this contest would be fairly straightforward, and we could move on to the push-ups were it not for the pimps, perverts, degenerates and outright fibbers that were participants in this contest!"

This was also unanimously approved of: "Tell it like it is!" "Down with degenerates!" Zulu raised his hand in a call for silence. The crowd obeyed.

"However, since the contest seems to be uniformly and ubiquitously seeded with those of questionable character, we do have some issues to resolve!"

"I have consulted with social experts on some of these issues, and I have made some determinations, as I will lay forth as follows:

"First, let everyone know, that being a smokejumper, I am thoroughly experienced and versed in lying. We invented lying. You can't put a lie over on me.

"Second, every crew hereby loses 15 points for lies, obfuscations, prevarications, and other dubious comments, actions, and gestures regarding this contest, the contestants, and, most especially, comments, actions, and gestures regarding the judge." At which point Zulu extended his middle finger in a universal signal.

"That puts the standing as follows:

Division Zulu	-15 points
Dozer B64	-15 points
Dozer C63	-15 points
Anderson Engine	-15 points
Badlands Water Tender	-15 points

"Shame on everyone on that list! Shame!" declared Zulu.

Everyone got into this, declaring in chorus "Shame, shame!" Zulu held his hand up again. Instantly, the crowd went silent in rapt attention.

"Next we have:

J & J	5-15 = -10
Champion	11-15 = -4
Columbus	17-15 = 2
Medicine Rock 2	37-15 = 22
Engine 961	47-15 = 32
Worland Engine	47-15 = 32
DOC 4	74-15 = 59

The last number was met with a loud chorus of lusty boo's.

"Hold it! Now you may have noticed a two-way tie for 2nd place. The judge requires Engine 961 and Worland Engine to select their toughest, baddest, meanest representative who shall present themselves inside this sacred circle of battle at this time!" Zulu gleefully grabbed a shovel and drew a circle in the dirt in the middle of the crowd.

The crowd went dead silent. People looked at each other uncertainly. What was up with THIS! Was Zulu really going to let these engine crews fight it out for 2nd place? What was he thinking? Who would step forward?

But with no hesitation whatsoever and absolutely no concern for their buddy's welfare, a member of Engine 961 was pushed into the circle. After a slightly bigger struggle, a hapless member of the Worland Engine was thrust into the circle. Both looked uncomfortable. They received no help from the crowd; just yells of "Kill him!" "Beat him to a pulp!" and other helpful advice.

Zulu looked pleased. He strut into the circle and put his hands on the two combatant's shoulders. "OK, you two know the game. It's called 'rock, scissor, paper' — on the count of three! One, two, three!" Engine 961's representative looked confused, but thrust his hand out flat, while Worland's rep made a fist.

"OK, Engine 961 has won second place and Worland Engine is in third place. Now step out of the sacred circle of battle!" The two representatives gratefully retreated, thankful

that they still possessed their ears, noses and dignity.

Zulu was just getting wound up. "Now, we have a protest about the lies and perambulations of our resident felons! In fact, during one of their radio reports, I happened to be standing behind a tree and observed them eating pizza while they were reporting 30 new smokes!"

"Boo, boo!" The crowd was displeased with this news. Cheats!

"So! I am deducting 30 more points from DOC-4, putting them at 29 points, which puts them in forth place!"

"Yea!" cheered the crowd.

"HOWEVER, they were pretty damned good liars, so I'm giving them 40 bonus points for that, which puts them back in first place."

"Yea!" This time the cheers just came from DOC 4, who were also sticking out their tongues at the others.

Zulu was still in high gear.

"Now, we have 11 felons and two accompanying near-felons that call themselves 'guards,' which makes 13 on DOC-4, compared to only 2 or 3 on each engine, and only one of me. So, we know they could beat us up. So they go back to first place!"

"Yea!" Cheers erupted from DOC 4, while the engine crews glared at them sullenly.

"However, we also know they had a better chance of finding fires than those of us tied by bungee cords to our rigs, so we'll take their score and divide by 13 and we get a score of 6, which puts them in 7th place!"

"Right on! Yeah!" The crowd leaped in the air, pounding each other on their backs.

"However, DOC gets a handicap of 10 points for fat and 10 for low I.Q., so they're back in first place!"

The crowd stopped jumping about and looked at Zulu with deer-in-the-headlights looks. DOC members weren't too sure themselves if they wanted these bonus points, but what the hell, it put them in first place again.

"But the rest of us get a handicap of 20 for fat and 20 for low I.Q., which puts DOC back in 8th place."

No one moved. They knew now that Zulu wasn't done with his calculations.

"But since DOC's looking a little pissed off, the judge exercises his right to put them back in first place!"

"Yea!" Now the inmates were pounding backs. Some were pounding backs not all that carefully.

"Congratulations, DOC-4, you are the first place winners!"

DOC-4 was really getting excited. This is what they had worked for. Finally someone was recognizing their efforts. No more wasted childhood. No more waiting for freedom. This was it. This was their big day.

"Now the bad news! I was visited by the union. Of course, DOC-4 does not belong to a legally recognized union, so they were under-represented in the discussion that ensued. To make a long story short, the "Union for Overweight and Stupid Firefighters Tied by Bungee Cords to Their Engines" has put an injunction on the whole proceedings and has prevailed upon the judge to enact the following judgment: the WINNERS, not the losers, shall do the pushups!"

"Yea!" The crowd was beside itself. At last justice was being done. They could see the wisdom in this judge. This was a man who lived by principle! This was a man who was going places! Possibly into politics. Who knows, maybe South Dakota's next governor!

"Now knowing that this is a bit of a setback to the winners, I am also decreeing that anyone on DOC-4 who wishes to engage in a little smokejumper game of chance can reduce their sentence of 50 pushups by transferring their pushups onto one, and only one, loser. That would be the person who remains after a group coin flip. Heads, you stay in for another round of flips, tails you go out of the circle. The last person in the circle does everyone's pushups. That would be 500 pushups! Is anyone game?"

One guy dropped immediately and did his 50 pushups. The other 12 shouldered up to the inside of the circle and stood expectantly. Zulu gamefully entered the circle himself and tossed the coin first. Tails! He stepped back again. The next contestant flipped the coin high into the air. Tails! "You're out! Lucky!" everyone shouted. The next coin was heads. "Oh, poor guy!" And on around it went several times over until only one guy was left. One of the guards! Har! One of the guards was the big loser for the day. 500 pushups.

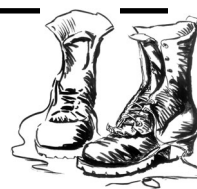
And, once again, smokejumper justice reached out and playfully touched another innocent. And another group learned the smokejumper slogan: "Trust No One, Believe Nothing." 🍄



1950 Missoula Rookies: Top-Paul Wilson and Phil Beaumonte 4th & 5th from left, Foreman Gar Thorsrud far right. Bottom-Rollo Julander and Roger Hurst 5th & 6th from left. (Courtesy Paul Wilson)



Items from the Fire Pack



We Need A Volunteer

I was assigned the job of building a bear-proof garbage pit. After many attempts, I became convinced that there was no such thing. A request came from the camp foreman for someone to jump the last of the Eagle parachutes, as it was time to repack it. No one volunteered. Finally, I volunteered with the proviso that I spot myself and the deal was made. When the chute opened I immediately understood why there were no volunteers for this job.

Lawrence R. Morgan (Missoula '44)

Global Dimensions

I had only heard of "peace movements." My introduction to them and their strong pronouncements against war made it easy for me to make the decision for CPS. I will always remember Dave Flaccus (MSO-43) for some mind-shaking statements that began me testing and checking out some of my own handed-down ideas of life and philosophy. I got beyond my own naïve world of half-reason into greater global dimensions. No other group (smokejumpers) in my experience can quite match them.

Asa Mundell (Missoula '43)

Big Prairie-A Sportsman's Paradise

I volunteered for the new smokejumper program. We had some of the top men from the three peace churches. The wilderness camp at Big Prairie, where I was stationed, consisted of a bunkhouse, cook shack, corral, loft and landing field. Mail was flown in once a week. We were on duty seven days a week. If we had spare time we would go fishing. I discovered this place was a sportsman's paradise.

Frank E. Neufeld (Missoula '44)

Classroom To Smokejumpers To Class- room

Joseph Osborn (MSO-43) was a descendant of many generations of Quakers and was teaching Applied Mechanics at Purdue University when he was drafted into the Civilian Public Service in 1942. He later transferred to the new smokejumper program in 1943 and was one of the few CPS jumpers to jump all three years of the program. After the war he taught Mechanics at Lehigh University until his retirement as a full professor in 1977.

Biography of Joseph C. Osborn
(Missoula '43)

Building A Bridge

I trained for my first seven jumps at Seeley Lake and then transferred to Basin Creek to work under Wag Dodge (MSO-41). Later we were transferred to Big Prairie. I made my first fire jump with Harry Mishler (MSO-43) on the Spotted Bear District on a single snag that had been hit by lightning. As the season ended, they flew in a portable sawmill, and we started building a bridge across the Flathead River.

Oliver Petty (Missoula '43)

The Last Straw For Many

For many American pacifists the attack on Pearl Harbor was the last straw, even for many members of the historic peace churches: Mennonite, Brethren, and Friends. Only about 12,000 of us held out against peer pressure to join the military. We have no idea how many joined to serve in non-combat military roles-the military refuses to say-but guestimates suggest many times our CPS numbers.

Gregg Phifer (Missoula '44)

To Hell With The Ad- ministration!

I arrived at Missoula and found my way to "Waffle Bottom Manor." I was 19 years of age, carefree, daring and scared. On entering the administrator's office, a man sitting behind a desk was singing a song that went like "To hell with selective service and the administration." I was shocked, but here the assistant director was verbalizing my very thoughts. I love this place.

Homer A. Rice (Missoula '45)

I Hated Shorts

I started out quite young, at approximately zero years. At about five years, they (parents) always made me wear shorts and shorts weren't even invented then, so I hated them with a passion. Later on when I arrived at the Elton, Oregon, CPS camp, most of the guys wore shorts or cutoff pants and everybody had a beard. This threw me for a loop again as the only men with beards at the time were the House of David Baseball Team.

John E. Scott (Missoula '44)

Good Old Black Gum

Hey! Changes come during the depression years. I chewed tar off the street for gum, played cowboys with the Jewish boys on the street, ate green apples with salt and had tree houses next door. We watched the sun eclipse one year through smoked glass. Thought the world was coming to an end!

Lowell V. Sharpes (Missoula '44)

Schoolboy Rowe and Dizzy Dean

Dad developed a talent for playing baseball, specifically playing the position of catcher. He excelled as a catcher to the point of being invited to spring

training (1934) with the St. Louis Browns. His camp mates included "Schoolboy Rowe" and Jerome "Dizzy" Dean. He was one of two catchers selected to make the team but, shortly before the end of spring training, tore a rotator cuff in his right shoulder,

thus ending his baseball career.

A Tribute To Winton H. Stucky
(Cave Junction '43)

Hard Times

The depression was hard for large families, and so it was we learned to work at a very early age. I got to

build the fire in the school building for 25 cents a week. How great to have a little spending money. In 1938 our parents with ten children moved to Oregon where I got a job on a farm earning \$1.25 an hour. I felt things were better in Oregon.

Earl Stutzman (McCall '44) 🍷

Historical Photos: (Right) Russian instructor-smokejumper Vasiliy Menshov in 1952 photo before boarding plane. (Courtesy Valery Korotkov)

(Below) 1938 Russian smokejumper checks his parachutes while aero-technician check the aircraft. (Courtesy Valery Korotkov)



The Gobi to Silver City

by Bill Buck (Cave Junction '53)

Jim Allen, this is for you. It's the debriefing I should have provided you some 52 years ago. No excuse, other than I just didn't feel comfortable barging into the boss's office and telling you guys how great it was. As I look back over those years, the New Mexico detail is still one of the most rewarding adventures I have ever had.

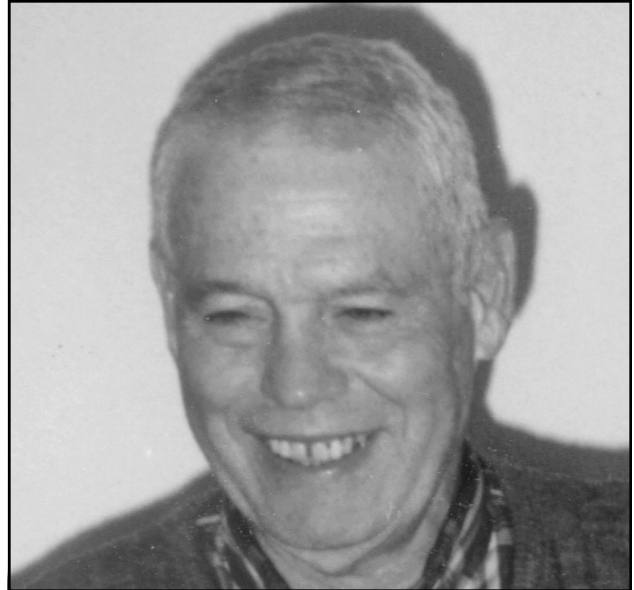
1954 was a good year. I graduated from college, saw some new and wonderful country, bought a used Harley, rode it back to Quantico, fell in love several times, got engaged once, got disengaged twice, took in the Jacksonville Jubilee (with Jim Oleson), hitched a ride to Medford on a logging truck with Bob Lewis, survived a couple of serious wrecks and joined the Marine Corps. I also spent a long night convincing **Bob Newberry** (CJ-51) that it would not be smart to yank a dangling ear ring out of some dude's ear, at the logger's bar. To top it off, I was selected for the New Mexico detail.

Jim Allen (NCSB-46) called me one wintry day and asked if I could be available for an early season fire detail to Silver City? "Yes, hell yes." Our family had finally worked up to "share croppers." Prior to that we'd just been tenants. I had finished college in January and was milking (it's been over fifty years since I had to start the milking by four o' clock every morning), shoveling out the cow barns, and waiting for the draft board to catch up with me.

I reported directly to Missoula for three weeks refresher training. The base was a short walk from the bus station and before I knew it, I was sitting in the mess hall with my new jump mates. There were three of us from the Gobi taking part in that inter-regional operation: **Jimmy Wright** (CJ-53), **Bob Crick** (CJ-53), and myself.

I couldn't understand why Region 1 would give up three positions on an 18-man crew. They were slots normally occupied by their own jumpers, and I'm sure there was keen competition to "make" the Silver City Crew. This was a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity. To my knowledge, this was the first year that Region 1 had shared this detail with any other Region. We knew that we'd have to perform if we were to be welcomed back. I can guarantee you that no one out-walked, out-worked, or out-enjoyed that detail more than we three men from the Gobi. I'm sure Bob and Jimmy were privy to the rationale of this inter-regional venture, but I just figured Jim Allen needed three guys in a hurry and we were available.

Besides I was too busy taking in the "Bright Lights" of Missoula. I didn't have time to be worried about anything else. We were introduced to the "Maverick Bar," and I shall never forget sitting in that little "honky tonk" and smiling every time the telephone rang. That's when the bartender, with his unmistakable "Jersey" accent, would yell over the bar room noise and announce, "Maverick Bar— Spida' speakin." When it grew dark, a pretty young lass would stand under the streetlight, play



Bill Buck (Courtesy B. Buck)

her guitar and sing "There Stands The Glass." It wasn't long before Jimmy Wright would be standing across the street next to her. I think the bright lights of Missoula were getting to him, too. Bob and I would sit there, drink some beer and just enjoy. At 138 pounds, I wasn't concerned about a beer gut in those days.

Our first formal group meeting was a safety meeting. **Fred Barnowsky** (MSO-42) was our Crew Boss, and there's never any question about who's in charge when Fred's in an area. As **Herb Oertli** (MSO-48) explained how, **Max Allen** (MSO-48) held his arm out and took a shot of Demerol. **Hal Samsel** (MSO-49) told how, in the event of a serious abdominal wound, one should first rinse off the intestines to make sure there's no ants or debris on them before we stow them back into the body cavity. We became friends with some mighty fine people, many who didn't go south with us.

We left Missoula in a Lockheed Lodestar with Ken Benesh (pilot) and John Williams (A&E Mechanic). The Lodestar, supposedly, hadn't been utilized as a jumper aircraft in the past and it was being evaluated at this time. There was some question about exit speed and the opening shock. There was a brief delay in takeoff, as I was summoned back to the hanger to take a phone call from the Commanding General in charge of the Michigan Selective Service System. It was decided that I would continue to New Mexico but report my whereabouts to my Draft Board immediately upon my return to Cave Junction. It didn't seem like such a long flight from Missoula, even though we made a slight detour around Mt. Shasta enroute. Little did I realize that I would be spending the night

on that mountain later that summer, but that's another story.

I had some reservations about New Mexico. I'd heard it was mostly desert and really hot. When we landed at the Grant County Airport, I knew that there would only be one shady spot in that whole world. We off loaded the Lode-star and threw our "Beamless Seamless" sacks into the wing shade and immediately flopped down. Well, one of us did; the rest had to dispose of their "Barf Bags." It was necessary to get quickly acclimated, if your lungs were to survive in that suffocating air. Coming out of the northern climes and suddenly dropping out of the clouds and stepping out into New Mexico was more than a mere cultural shock. As far as you could see it was brown and barren. At least we rode to town in the back of a "stake side." Thank the Lord I didn't have to ride in the cab.

Prior to 1954, the jumpers were located in Deming, which was some 45 miles south of Silver City. One of the more interesting features of the move to Silver City was that the parachute loft and our bunkhouse were part of the Gila Forest Warehouse in downtown Silver City. I would be less than forthright if I failed to mention that "Madam Millie," the sole owner and proprietor of three whorehouses in the western states, had her "Silver City Branch" located just a few yards from our back fence. This, of course, led to more fictional yarns than factual endeavors. The beer (50 cents) was always cold at Millie's and some of the early risers (like Max Allen, Herb Ortle, "Paper Legs" and Hans Trankle) would go over and drink coffee with Millie. However, I do recall a few of us paying a courtesy call one evening, seeing as how we were brand new to the neighborhood. It was an intriguing evening, especially when this plump and buxom brunette with red high heels slowly descended the staircase and, prior to reaching the landing, threw one leg over the banister and made a sociable inquiry, "Any of you boys wanta do the Bedspring Boogie?" Less you form the wrong opinion, remember, Gobiites are an honorable lot and wouldn't subscribe to the debauchery of Millie's place.

On our first jump, I discovered Malapai rock. Malapai comes in all sizes and shapes. It's mostly brown and takes the physical characteristics of an angular "conglomerate." Malapai had to be the reason that the Pulaski was invented. It occurs throughout Arizona and New Mexico, all along the Mogollon Rim. The Gobi has innumerable large and tough ol' rocks, but none as treacherous and cunning as that dang Malapai. Anyways, my chute caught a pole-sized tree on our first jump, and the tree gave just enough to allow me to sit on and bounce up and down on one of those damned Malapai rocks. When that happens, the one thing you don't do is report an accident if you want to retain your spot on the Jump List. However, I did fashion a canvas doughnut to protect my tailbone in the future. It worked just fine.

My only other injury occurred when **Roland "Big Andy" Andersen** (MSO-52) and I jumped a fire on a narrow, hog-back ridge in the Gila Wilderness. It was one of those deals when the winds were so hot and squirrely that safety is less than marginal. But with lightning and fires everywhere, you circle around and around and work your way in after the storm cells pass. Then you drop streamers until you get two to stay

on the same ridge. On that occasion I pulled the Achilles tendon, but it could have been a hell of a lot worse. I was the second man on a two-man stick. Andy landed in the top of a skinny little pine tree, his chute hung in the brush below him with the tree whipping and bending almost in two. Unfortunately there wasn't a pine tree for me to grab. That's when I hurt my foot. We had some great jumps on the Gila, and the forest personnel were a pleasure to be around.

We soon learned that when it comes to Forest Service, culturally, there's a whole lot of difference between the Southwest and the Northwest. The townspeople, and almost everyone else for that matter, accepted us as friends just like we were one of their own. One of the many friends we made was the Fire Control Officer of the Gila. His name was Joy Baldwin. He was a great big, raw-boned, "hell for leather" individual and was, without question, the best fireman I have ever known. Joy thought the world of his jumpers. It was Joy's vision and persistence that led to the establishment and the early season use of smokejumpers in the Southwest. He had convinced the Washington Office, that if he could get a detail of jumpers each spring, no fire would ever exceed nine acres in the Gila Wilderness. Advanced planning assured the maximum utilization of jumpers. We took double everything with us (chutes, jump gear, etc.) from Missoula. The Forest Dispatcher (Cal Salyers) would dispatch ground crews to relieve us as quickly as possible. Short pack strings were dispatched (to retrieve our packs) before we even hit the ground. It was a well organized and synchronized operation.

The town of Silver City was a great place for smoke jumpers. Many of us enjoyed Mexican food for the first time and many times thereafter. The town had a population of about 6,000 people in those days. Copper mines and cattle ranches, the Forest Service, and a small teachers college were the primary sources of employment. The barracks were only a block from downtown, and until we became acquainted and found the Casa Loma Night Club, about all we had to do after supper was to hang out.

I think it took the locals awhile to get used to those "weird guys" in town. Well we wouldn't have been quite so weird if Max Allen and his buddy hadn't broke out their Bermuda shorts as soon as we arrived. Every evening they would stroll up and down the "main drag" like they knew what they were doing. Actually, the rest of us didn't want to be seen with them, dressed like they were, so we avoided them like the plague. A couple of the guys drove their cars down and whenever the weekends were slow, we all had to take the trip down to the border (Los Palomas) at least once just to say we'd been to Mexico. One day we even got to take a practice jump, and Ken Benesh took us up to 5,000 ft over the airport and then we pulled a skirmish-line exit. I think Fred would use any excuse to get us a jump.

On one fire **Richard "Paper-Legs" Peterson** (MYC-47) and I came out of Willow Creek to the White Creek Guard Station (15 miles) in less than four hours. We left our packs down at Willow Creek for the Packer, so all we had to do was hike up and out. Well we had lots of incentive to get on back. It was Friday night, the Rodeo was in town, there were fireworks planned for that evening, Crick was entered in the Bull Riding

and there was dancing and pretty girls. There were just a whole lot of activities for us to supervise. In addition, the Ranger (Don Jirsa) and his family were going to town and would give us a ride if we got out to his place (White Creek Guard Station) by three o'clock that afternoon. Well, we knew we had made good time and there was a good chance that we would skip to the top of the jump list in the morning. Shoot, anyone would walk fast with all that going on, and we sure didn't want to spend the weekend at the White Creek waiting for Monday.

Pete and I got back to the loft in plenty of time to get out to the rodeo grounds. We knew that if we were to watch Crick ride his bull, we'd better be there for the first go-round. We got there early enough, and we found him in the tent with the sawdust floor and the makeshift bar. He was preparing himself for his event. He had on his drinking smile, his eyes were glazed, gloves in his hip pocket, his "riggin" thrown over his shoulder and a can of beer in his hand with his little "pinky" sticking out like he was at a ladies tea party. There was some tension in the air and there was a lot of noise. Bob came over

to me, lifted his beer and said, "Brave Juice." Bob stayed on his bull for a couple good jumps, but he was last seen heading for the bar with that bow-legged walk and dusting off his britches. I often wondered what would it take to get me on one of those "Brutes?" I just don't think I could drink enough beer to get that brave.

Bob Crick and I got together again in Oregon when I returned from Okinawa. We took in the sights of Grants Pass and other points south and talked about our Gobi jump mates, what they were doing, and if anyone had tried to arm wrestle Ed Scholz for a fifth lately.

The Southwest and its people made a lasting impression on me, so much so that we (Roberta and I) returned and spent most of our lives there. Equally impressive were the individuals that made up that early-season detail to Silver City in 1954. What a privilege it was to be one of them. Anyways, Jim, that's the end of my debriefing. 🐼

Bill Buck can be reached at 304 Chippewa St, Tecumseh, MI 49286 (517-423-4639) or at bbforester@tc3net.com

FEATURED MEMBER

DENIS "DENNY" BRESLIN (N. CASCADES '69)

AS NOTED IN THE Odds and Ends column, I caught Denis Breslin being mentioned in the December 19, 2005, issue of *Time* magazine representing the pilot's union for American Airlines. After confirming that Denny is the same person mentioned in the article, I wanted some background info and thought our other members would also be interested.

Denny grew up in Twisp, which is just a few miles from NCSB, and rookied in 1969. **Francis Lufkin** (NCSB-40) was the Base Manager and **Bill Moody** (NCSB-57) was a squadleader. Denny jumped three seasons but says, "I missed some of the summers by leaving early for football at Washington State Univ. (where he was a walk-on wide receiver), and in the summer of '70 I missed eight weeks while attending Aviation OCS in Pensacola. But for all the jumps and fires and folks – it remains one of the best jobs ever."

At the end of the 1971 season, he went on active duty getting his Navy wings in 1973.

"I flew T-39s in SE Asia for three years from Japan to Vietnam, from Iwo Jima to Singapore, and everything in between. I stayed active in competitive

jumping, making a total of around 750 jumps through my tour in the Philippines and back in Pensacola."

Denny retired as a Lt. Commander in 1986 with a combined 13 years of active and reserve service. He was hired by American Airlines in 1978 and flew 727s, 707s DC-10s and 767s in Chicago before transferring to San Diego in 1986.

"I made captain on the S-80 in '88 and on the 767 in '93 and moved up to B-777 captain two years ago and now fly from LAX to London and Tokyo."

He has a little more than three years to go until mandatory retirement and spends a lot of time helping to keep the company and pension plan solvent.

In 1995 Denny was elected as the LAX rep for the Allied Pilots Association, which is the pilot's union for American Airlines. He spent three terms on the board of directors, during which time they went through a strike, a sick out, and contract restructuring.

"I'm very proud to have worked with Senator Bob Smith in 2002 to sponsor the legislation that created the Federal Flight Deck Officer program which is now responsible for arming over 6000 pilots in commercial airlin-



Denny Breslin (Courtesy D. Breslin)

ers. I was elected the National Communications Committee Chairman in the summer of 2004 and have been their official spokesman since then."

"I married a beautiful and wonderful AA flight attendant in 1980, named Jean Marie, and we have two kids. My oldest, DJ, graduated from USC last spring and daughter Ani is a sophomore at Cal State Long Beach, majoring in 'surfing.' I stay up on the news through the Smokejumper magazine and it puzzles me that more active jumpers are not members. You all do outstanding work and I look forward to each issue. I published Gene Hamner's story about the Ravens in our APA News Digest last fall and credited Smokejumper Magazine and Gene." 🐼

The Everclear Fire

by John Walden (Missoula '65)

As we flew up canyon over the Absaroka Mountains on our way to a fire on the east side of the range, the three of us in the back compartment looked at each other and wondered if we would break out over the top or smack into the ridge line. Some pilots loved to fly the canyon updraft, and the prevailing winds in the afternoon over the northeast corner of Yellowstone Park would lift a Twin Beech like an elevator in a narrow shaft.

It was comforting being a jumper knowing that if anything went wrong with the aircraft, you could always exit out the door. Seeing the canyon walls above the wings on the up-canyon flight negated any idea of an emergency exit. As we broke out over the top, the Shoshone National Forest was below. We all breathed a sigh of relief as the horizon fell below.

Our spotter and base foreman, **Larry Nelsen** (MSO-56), climbed out of the right seat and into the crowded back compartment. We all looked out the left windows and doorway to orientate ourselves to the fire and the jump spot as we circled. It was getting late. The shadows were growing long and the canyon bottoms were turning black. The wind was laying the smoke out flat, but the fire was showing no flames. The jump spot was a long narrow ridge just down from the crest.

The country was a lot like the Gila in New Mexico-high, rocky and windy. It was always a challenge to get everything and everybody into a windy, mountainous jump spot. I was first on the list and hooked up after the second set of streamers landed in the spot. I opened, checked my canopy and turned into the wind. Looking down, I found myself halfway down the ridge and moving backwards fast enough that I would be blown way past the spot and into the canyon below. I started pulling down on the front lines of my 5A to spill air and slip my chute. I let my lines out about 50 feet above the ridge and landed just short of the end of the spot.

Greg Anderson (MSO-68) was next out the door. He also had a 5A and turned into the wind. He didn't slip his chute and went flying past the spot about 300 feet headed backwards into the canyon below.

This was in 1970. I had spent an active fire season on the regular New Mexico crew earlier that spring and had replaced West Yellowstone jumper **Bob Arndt** (MSO-65), who was returning to his teaching job. I had lots of fresh experience jumping in the high, windy and rocky environment of the Gila, and this gave me a big advantage on this jump.

Jon Foland (MSO-68) was the third man to hit the slipstream. He was jumping a T10 that was just being added to the inventory at West Yellowstone. The new chute was faster and had a quicker turning speed than the 5A. I was content to see the T10 in action a few times before I gave it a ride. This jump would give me a good benchmark as to what kind of a chute it was.

Jon deployed at the same place as Greg and I. He quartered

left and right a few times into the wind. It soon became obvious he wasn't losing the ground we had. The T10 soon neared the downwind side of the spot that terminated in a 15-foot cliff that ran out into a rocky boulder field below. Jon made one last quarter turn just as he passed the lip of the vertical wall. The sharp turn and the wind oscillated him out until he and his chute were at the same height. At that moment the downdraft that curled over the cliff grabbed everything and smashed Jon into the rocks below.

Jon and Greg had distinguished themselves with their remarkable talents. Greg could flat out run anyone in a foot race, and Jon was known for being an animal both on and off the job.

As Jon slammed into the rocks, I thought for sure that we would be immobilizing him for a helicopter ride. As I moved closer, his lifeless body began to move. Then it moved more as he rolled over onto his hands and knees. His risers draped over his shoulders as he set back. He began to dig around in his PG bag. He soon pulled out a bottle of Everclear whiskey and proclaimed, "Look-it there, I didn't break a thing."

Greg showed up at the spot in a remarkable short time. We gratefully laid out the orange double-Ls, grabbed our tools, and headed for the fire. We quickly had a line around it and, after catching our breath, we began to find something to eat.

Needless to say, the dogs howled at the moon that night. The Everclear may have survived the rocks, but it didn't survive the night. To this day, the jump and fire is remembered as the Everclear Fire. 🍷

John can be reached at 12 Woods Rd., Republic, WA 99166 or jwalden@cuonlinenow.com



John Walden (Courtesy J. Walden)

The View from Outside the Fence



by **Chris Sorensen**
(Associate)

IN OCTOBER, MISSOULA U.S. District Court Judge Donald W. Malloy ruled that the Forest Service violated environmental laws when it failed to go through a public process to consider the dangers of fire retardant drops that have killed thousands of fish. Judge Molloy ordered the Forest Service to prepare a formal environmental analysis of the effects of fire retardant on the environment and consult with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service on the potential harm to endangered fish, but did not bar the Forest Service from using fire retardant until it complied. Forest Service Employees for Environmental Ethics filed suit in 2003, a year after 1,000 to 2,000 pounds of retardant were dropped in Fall Creek in Central Oregon killing more than 20,000 fish. Judge Molloy rejected the Forest Service argument that using fire retardant was not a major federal action, but a series of smaller actions by fire commanders with no time to do a full environmental analysis. "All evidence suggests that the USFS was told by other agencies to consult NEPA on fire retardant issues," the judge wrote. "The decision not to involve NEPA appears to be a political decision. The only reason the

USFS has provided for not applying NEPA is that there was no proposal for a major federal action. This is not a reasonable conclusion." Molloy also rejected the Forest Service argument for not consulting the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service over the dangers to endangered fish. The Forest Service had argued that determining the types of fire retardant to use, issuing guidelines for its use, nationwide fire retardant contracts, and the longtime use of retardant were not "programmatic activities" requiring consultation, and there is no effect on endangered species until the retardant is actually dropped.

In December in another case before Judge Malloy, he ordered Missoula environmental groups (The Native Ecosystems Council, Alliance for the Wild Rockies and The Ecology Center) to post a \$100,000.00 bond to appeal a decision over the Basin Creek timber sale. The bond will be forfeited if the environmental groups lose the appeal. The Basin Creek timber sale is a 1600-acre site of beetle-killed trees in the highlands south of Butte, Montana. The watershed provides forty percent of Butte's drinking water and is in the wildland-urban interface. If the area should suffer a major fire, Butte-Silver Bow would be required to build a new water

treatment plant to filter sediment from raw water due to the loss of ground cover and trees at a cost of millions of dollars. The Federal Court in Missoula is clogged with environmental cases and perhaps requiring environmental groups to post bond on appeals is one way to discourage frivolous lawsuits.

A Stevensville, Montana, Boy Scout, Dallas Fadely, is going to memorialize the crew of Tanker 24 for his Eagle Scout project. A picnic table, shelter and two benches will be built this summer at the trailhead to Little St Joseph Peak at the Bass Creek Overlook in the Bitterroot. A plaque to honor Captain John Sielinger and First Officer Robert Shaw will also be placed at the site. Tanker 24 was lost on October 16, 1991, in bad weather headed to Missoula. A memorial and dedication program will be held at the Bass Creek Campground on July 4th, 2006. If you wish to support this worthy project or need additional information, Dallas Fadely can be contacted at 406-777-2617.

This column is dedicated to the memory of Pilot Denny Lynch who flew for Johnson Flying Service, owned and operated Lynch Flying Service and Lynch Air Tankers, and flew Tanker's 57 and 59 in the movie "Always" for Steven Spielberg. A great guy and a true gentleman. 🙏

Smokejumper Merchandise

NSA Smokejumper apparel, desk accessories, drinkware, knives and much more are now available for purchase through the NSA website or by contacting the Western Heritage Company, 524 West 67th Street, Loveland, Colorado 80538, 800-303-5703, Fax: 970-461-0579. All purchases benefit the NSA. We welcome the Western Heritage Company as the supplier of our NSA products.

Lois Jansson Tribute

by Carl Gidlund (Missoula '58)

Lois Jansson was a devout, warm, bright and loving wife, mother, friend and teacher who left to those whom she loved a profound yet often witty history of her adventurous life.

She died at the age of 85 on Jan. 25, a victim of the Parkinson's disease that seized her body eight years ago but never quenched her spirit.

Lois was a Forest Service wife. A native of Enid, in Eastern Montana, she married Bob Jansson in October 1941 as they were completing their studies at the University of Montana, she in social work, he in forestry.

Their first assignment was to the Helena National Forest in Montana where, by 1949, he had worked up to ranger of

the Canyon Ferry District and she had borne three children, Ruth, Paul and Roger.

On Aug. 5 of that year, Ranger Jansson summoned a planeload of smokejumpers to a smoldering fire in the Gates of the Mountain Wilderness. It was in a ravine named Mann Gulch.

The fire blew up and 12 smokejumpers and a fireguard from Bob's district were killed. Jansson, on the lower end of the fire when it crowned, fell unconscious and barely escaped death himself.

When he recovered, his duties included aiding two jumpers who lived briefly after the blowup, then finding and identifying the horribly burned bodies of the other victims.



Historic Photo McCall 1945 L-R: John Garber, Dale Fickle, Ralph Miller and Weldon Cook. (Courtesy George Anderson)

Mann Gulch had a profound effect on many lives, including those of the sensitive ranger and his family.

"Bob came home . . . so tired and unstrung, he hardly seemed like the husband and father we knew," Lois wrote.

Three months later, Ranger Jansson escorted a fire researcher, Harry Gisborne, into Mann Gulch. There, Gisborne died of a heart attack.

All those deaths, accusations from a few of the dead jumpers' families that the Forest Service was negligent, plus a steady barrage of requests for personally escorted tours of Mann Gulch drove the family from Helena. They transferred to Priest Lake in the spring of 1950.

In a memoir, Lois noted, "Bob's final act before we drove away from the Helena house was to burn the uniform that he had worn at Mann Gulch, and the jacket he had been wearing the evening Mr. Gisborne died."

She recalled in a letter written several years later that "Priest Lake was primitive, 13 bars and no churches, so we both got lay speakers' credentials and founded The Priest Lake Community Church."

Devout Methodists though they were, the Janssons' congregation included 13 denominations. She wrote, "We found out all the things Protestants can manage to divide over: what type of baptism – sprinkling, pouring or immersion; what kind of communion and how often; what hymns to sing; what kind of church government to set up; whether to work with the Council of Churches or remain independent; and on and on far into the night of each board meeting."

They also helped set up the first Campfire Girls group and Boy Scout troop in the area.

In 1954, Bob Jansson fell ill and, after a series of tests, doctors determined he'd inherited a rare and incurable disease, polycystic kidneys, that would probably take his life within 15 years.

The Forest Service transferred the family to Newport, Wash. to be nearer to Spokane and Coeur d'Alene where he could receive palliative treatment.

She wrote of "the difficulty of trying to keep our ship on an even course when the captain is not at the wheel. I

remember one Christmas eve I was helping him clean up after breakfast when he said, 'This is the 25th!' The nurse said, 'Oh no, Mr. Jansson. This is only the 24th. I think they plan to let you go home for Christmas.' He said, 'I didn't mean the date. I was counting up and it's my 25th hospitalization.'"

And there were many more after that.

Because of mounting drug expenses, Lois decided to teach since, she reasoned, there would be more job opportunities than in social work. She commuted to Cheney where she earned an education degree at Eastern Washington University, then began a 25-year teaching career.

Her first classrooms were in Oldtown, Idaho and Newport. Then, when her husband was transferred to the Coeur d'Alene Forest headquarters in 1960, she taught second graders in the Dalton and Hayden grammar schools.

Her husband died in 1965 and, since then, so has her daughter Ruth. Son Paul is on a waiting list for a kidney while Roger recently received a kidney transplant.

Through an extensive correspondence with him, Lois became a good friend of author Norman Maclean who wrote *Young Men and Fire* about Mann Gulch. Her remembrances of her husband's role in that fire and its aftermath found their way into that best seller.

And after the elder Maclean's death in 1990, she began a friendship and correspondence with his son John, helping him with research that led to his book *Fire on the Mountain*, the story of a 1994 Colorado fire that killed 14 fire fighters.

Through it all, Lois continued to care for others outside her shrinking family circle. She was a volunteer at the Coeur d'Alene Women's Shelter, working on its crisis hotline, and son Paul recalls many night missions when she rescued women from abusive mates.

Friend Yvonne McDonald remembers her teaching adult Sunday school and working in the kitchen of Coeur d'Alene's Community United Methodist Church.

Some of the most moving memories of Lois Jansson are from a man who calls her "my godmother." Peter Truong, South Vietnam Army veteran and now a deputy with the King County, Wash., sheriff's office, says Lois Jansson "adopted" him after he fled Vietnam to land in Coeur d'Alene in 1975.

"She was a very, very caring woman. I met victims of domestic violence who were staying in her house. And she was tutoring students up through high school for free.

"She taught me English, helped me with my schoolwork, how to deal with Americans. I worked up to manager of Sambo's Restaurant because she taught me about young people."

Lois' son Roger, who fights forest fires with the Idaho Department of Lands, says his mother never expressed concern about his career, but a few years ago he read over her shoulder one of her journal comments: "I do hate it that Roger fights fire. One is enough to give to the cause." 🌲

Carl can be contacted at 9232 Clarkview Pl., Hayden Lake, ID 83835 or smokejumper@adelphia.net

New Smokejumper Book

Frank Fowler's (MSO-52) new book, *High-Mountain Two-Manner*, is a memoir of his college days in Montana, highlighting his three seasons of summer work as a smokejumper.

Frank enthusiastically wrote of his adventures and experiences to his mother in letters, which she saved. They form the basis for telling this young lad's exploits through his voice 50 years ago.

Read an excerpt from the book at:

www.xlibris.com/high-mountaintwo-manner

The book is available in hardback and paperback through the above website or by calling 1-888-795-4274 ext 479.

The One that Almost Got Away

by Robert Hough (NCSB '51)

We were flown to Grants Pass, Oregon, to assist in stamping out some fires from a big storm that went through. Since we were from the North Cascades unit, we were each assigned a Cave Junction jumper as a partner. There were lots of fires, and jumpers were going out as rapidly as they returned. My Cave Junction partner and I jumped a fire deep in the Oregon back country. The fire was on the side of a ridge covered by a mass of downed lodgepole pine. A crosscut saw was dropped as additional equipment and, of course, it landed in a tree about 40 feet above the ground. The nearly bare ridge was bigger than several football fields and yet our gear landed in a tree. Do you suppose the spotter was using the tree as an aiming point? Now that I think about it, my equipment always landed in trees. We retrieved our gear and proceeded to attack the fire.

We kept getting little spot fires outside our fireline and later that afternoon discovered a green pine tree that had been hit by lightning and had fire in the top. The tree was about four feet in diameter and too high to climb. The only solution was to cut it down. Nothing to it, right? Hell, our ancestors did it all the time. For those not familiar, a green pine tree has lots of pitch that jams a saw. The Forest Service was very thoughtful and had provided a pint of solvent to keep the saw from sticking. This would have been sufficient for a one or two foot tree, but of course we ended up a couple feet short of the amount of solvent needed. Five hours later the giant came down and at this point we were almost out of water. No problem. On top of the ridge the Forest Service had conveniently placed a sign, "2 miles to some creek." It was now midnight and we were exhausted. We rolled out the paper sleeping bags and collapsed.

About four in the morning I was awakened by a very strong wind whistling through the trees. It added new life to our dying fire, which started climbing up the ridge. We built seven firelines and each time the blaze jumped the line and continued up the ridge. A fire tower noted the increased smoke and sent an observer plane to see what was happening. We put out a sign for eight additional jumpers. We were now out of water, but kept on working. We cut a swathe 10 or 15 feet wide through a fir thicket at the top of the ridge. By now it was nearly noon. I said to my partner, "Let it burn, it should stop when it reaches the top of the ridge. I'm going for water, give me your canteen." I started down the trail and very soon came to a pure crisp bubbling spring across the trail. We had been without water for four hours and it was only 100 yards away. About two in the afternoon the jumper plane came by and dropped two more jumpers: **Ed Mays** (NCSB-51) and his Cave Junction partner. I said to Ed, "You sure took your time getting here." He replied, "Hell, we just



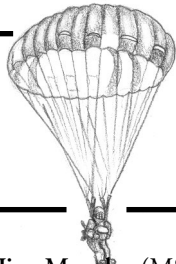
Bob Hough (Courtesy B. Hough)

got back from our last fire at noon. Everyone is out on fires, there are no more jumpers. We are it." Having two additional people and a good supply of mountain water gave us new life. We tackled the fire, which was over four acres by now. The wind subsided to a mountain breeze and we soon started mopping up. Early that evening a twelve man ground crew arrived after a 12 mile hike. They had a camp cook, good grub and plenty of supplies. I'll never forget the remark the cook made about us not having a clean cooking area. We had been too busy with the fire and gobbling down our "C" rations to tidy up the place. I guess everyone has their own priorities. The fire got turned over to the ground crew; we got a fair night's rest and packed out the next day. 🐼

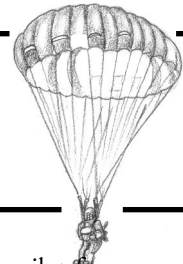
Retired Lt. Col. Bob Hough and his wife live at 4940 SE Hovgaard Rd, Olalla, WA 98359 and he can be reached via email at DadHough@aol.com

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Odds and Ends



Jim Murphy (MSO-48): "I read with great interest the story in the October issue of *Smokejumper* that talked about Lyle Grenager's experiences, both as a jumper and the Taiwan CIA mission. I also knew **Gar Thorsrud** (MSO-46). Lyle and I were classmates at the Missoula County H.S. as were **James Harrison** (MSO-47) and **Eldon Diettert** (MSO-49), two of the men killed at Mann Gulch. I had just come off a fire jump in the Locksa area of Idaho and was in the loft at the Missoula airport when word came in about the Mann Gulch Fire. My memories are still pretty vivid about what happened in those trying days.

Lyle and I were students at MSU in October of 1949 when we were called back for a rescue jump. As I recall, we carried a lost hunter to the airstrip in a little less than five hours, which we believed was some kind of record for those days, especially since there were no improved trails for much of the way. And, I especially remember the \$50 received, a lot of money to a perpetually broke student."

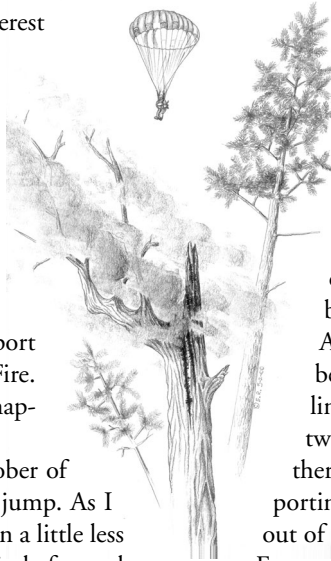
Earl Cooley (MSO-40) celebrated his 94th birthday September 26th. He and his wife, Irene, still live in their home in Missoula.

David "Doc" Kauffman (MSO-45) was recently featured in a newspaper article in the Whitefish, Montana, paper. Doc, a retired physician, still runs a 314-acre farm south of town at age 83.

Goods news from **Roger Brandt** (Associate) as he continues to try to save what's left of the Gobi. The nomination to place the Siskiyou Smokejumper Base on the National Register of Historic Places was approved on Thursday by the Oregon State Advisory Committee on Historic Preservation during a meeting in Jacksonville, Oregon. The nine-member board reviewed several other nominations as well, and the ones that were approved will be forwarded to the State Historic Preservation Officer. Once all the final paperwork is received, the nomination will be forwarded to Washington, D.C. where it will be placed on the National Register of Historic Places.

The Review Board suggested a couple of additions for the final copy and voted unanimously to approve the nomination. A final copy will be printed on archival paper, forwarded to the State Historic Preservation Office and then forwarded to Washington, DC. After the base is on the register, the community can begin working toward getting the base officially designated as a National Historic Site, get signs erected, work to create a museum, and other things that will make the base an important tourism attraction in Josephine County.

Fred Cooper (NCSB-62) forwarded an interesting article by Paul Singer in the *National Journal* concerning Air America



pilots. "If you were once a pilot for a secret airline run by the CIA, flying all sorts of clandestine military operations in Southeast Asia for three decades, are you entitled to government retirement benefits? The Defense Department doesn't think so. The Air Force has rejected a petition by former Air America employees to have their time in the unfriendly skies declared 'active duty,' which would earn them veteran's benefits. The CIA has acknowledged that it owned Air America and its predecessor, Civil Air Transport, beginning in the late 1950s, and that it used the airline to run support missions in Southeast Asia for two decades." An Air Force review board ruled that there is not enough evidence that the airline was supporting military operations. As usual, the government is out of touch with itself.

From email: Michael Mackinnon, only son of **John "Mike" Mackinnon** (MSO-57), was killed yesterday (October 27, 2005) in Iraq. Capt. Mackinnon, a West Point graduate, was a company commander with the 3rd Infantry Division on his second Iraq tour. He died of acute brain trauma while on patrol with his unit. An explosion of a roadside bomb destroyed his Humvee. He leaves a wife and two children. Trust funds have been set up for daughter Madison and son Noah. Laura Sullivan, Capt. McKinnon's oldest sister, is administering the funds. If you wish to donate, please endorse your check to Laura Sullivan, then mail it to her at 259 Anderson Blvd., Helena, MT 59601.

Lewiston, Idaho, *Morning Tribune* 10/25/05: Clearway Services of Whitebird won a \$37,672 contract for the Mann Gulch Trail reconstruction and maintenance project. The trail is located 15 miles north of Helena and can only be accessed by boat. It's near the site where 13 (12-Ed) smokejumpers died on Aug. 5, 1949.

Mike Hill (WYS-95): I arrived on Antarctica five days ago (Nov. 2005). I'm serving (the next three months) on one of the six helitacks that support the Antarctica summer science missions conducted within a 200-mile range of our base at Mac town. It is the nickname for the largest US base in Antarctica and its population will swell to around 1200 people. I will be working 12-hour days, six days a week.

Karl Brauneis (MSO-77) working on Hurricane Katrina relief: "I am with the Rocky Mountain Team at the Naval Construction Battalion Base in Gulf Port, MS. We are running a center (shelter) for relief workers the same as we would run a fire camp. The center can technically feed and house up to 1600 workers, although our numbers fluctuate around 800. I am working as the Billeting Officer. We process all of the incoming to house and schedule for meals. We are the 4th Team to rotate

in, so it is a well run and smooth operation.”

Bill Moody (NCSB-57) in response to request for info involving NSA members and the hurricane relief efforts: “The Type II Team I was on was assigned to Katrina for three weeks in Sept. and early Oct. We were a supply and distribution operation assigned to FEMA. I went down as an Air Tactical Group Supervisor. There was no aviation activity, so I functioned as a Div. Group Supervisor supervising a truck staging area. When we arrived we had about 200 trucks. When we left we had 782 trucks assigned to our operation. FEMA was extremely difficult to work with. IMT effectiveness was/is greatly impaired by FEMA who operates outside the ICS structure and principles, although they claim to be trained in and operate within the ICS structure.

George Marcott (NCSB-73) (retired FMO-Wenatchee N.F.) was one of the two Operation Section Chiefs on the Team.”

Scott Belknap (MYC-83): “I responded Hurricane Rita in the capacity of Field Observer and reported to Beaumont, Texas, on October 10. My job included daily postings of updated maps identifying points of distribution, mobile and fixed kitchens, and Emergency Operations Centers. During the second week of my assignment, I switched to the Safety Officer position. The bulk of my work focused on speeding control around the Ford Park compound and trying to maintain hygiene practices to avoid cold/flu breakouts in camp. Our mission was to close down the Ford Park Support Center by October 23. I returned to my home unit on October 25.”

Steve Hall (MSO-70): “On September 19, I flew to Montgomery, Alabama, to participate in Hurricane Katrina disaster relief and during my assignment Hurricane Rita hit. My specific job was Support Dispatcher in the Alabama-Mississippi coordination center. I worked at the pleasure of FEMA. FEMA is a different animal than we in the fire-dispatch community are used to. Although I did not witness any of the devastation, I can only imagine what those people went through during the storm and that was only the beginning for them. Not only did they lose their homes, most likely they lost their cars, their jobs, their possessions and, in some cases, family members.

Ryan Swartz (NIFC-02): “I was assigned to Barksdale Air Force Base in Shreveport, Louisiana, for the Hurricane Katrina relief effort from October 4 to October 18, 2005. From Barksdale AFB, orders were filled for relief supplies needed at affected areas. My duties consisted of inventorying incoming and outgoing tractor-trailers hauling relief supplies, such as ice, water, blankets and home repair kits, to name a few.”

Phil Gerhardson (RAC-88): “I served as a Strike Team Leader for two Hotshot crews working near Beaumont, Texas on Hurricane Rita clean-up. Our primary mission was cutting trees away from power lines and alleyways to expedite the return of power to residential and commercial users. In addition, we cleared roads, opened driveways, and worked on hazard-tree removal at an elementary school.”

Tyler Doggett (NIFC-01): “During the Hurricane Rita response, I was responsible for tracking/coordinating shipments of water, ice, MREs, tarps and cots from the Regional Staging area in Lake Charles, Louisiana, to the points

of distribution in the nearby parishes. Our Incident Management Team was also supporting two base camps with caterers, showers and laundry facilities for the National Guard, Search and Rescue, Parish Officials, Army Corps of Engineers and the truck drivers.”

Steve Hall (MSO-70): Last Sunday afternoon, November 20, 2006, my daughter, Christina, was crowned Miss Albuquerque again. She has been competing in pageants for several years. Last year she was First Runner Up in the Miss New Mexico pageant. Hopefully, in June 2006, she'll take the Miss New Mexico title. If so, it's off to Atlantic City and Miss America. She's a graduate of Eastern New Mexico University with a degree in Vocal Performance and hopes to be a performer on a Disney cruise ship. Needless to say, I'm very proud of her.

Jack Dunne (MSO-46) forwarded a newspaper article concerning a November 18, 2005, program at the Glacier Park Airport featuring smokejumping and aviation. Bob Sallee, Fred Brauer and Earl Cooley participated in the event.

Calvin Hilty (CJ-43): I really appreciate Smokejumper magazine. It brings back memories of 60 years ago when I was young and full of enthusiasm for parachuting. I made 21 jumps without injury and enjoy telling my grand and great-grandkids about being a smokejumper. *Calvin was a member of the 1st crew at Cave Junction when they opened the base in 1943. (Ed.)*

Hal Meili (CJ-52): Normally I can find a relationship between my poems (printed in *Smokejumper*) and one of the articles in the magazine. “My Sunshine” (Jan. 2006) followed Walt Rumsey's statement on the Mann Gulch Fire. I fought the Mann Gulch Fire. I was a senior in high school working for the Forest Service in Idaho. What I remember about the fire is that the ashes were knee deep and there were no limbs on the trees—just black poles.”

Jerry Dixon (MYC-71) celebrated the 200th anniversary of Lewis and Clark's Voyage of Discovery with a 1,362-mile trip through the Rocky Mountains that lasted three months. His book, *Rocky Traverse*, put out by Bookman Publishing, has sold out the first edition.

Tara Rothwell (RAC-72): “I enjoyed the last issue of the magazine, especially the story about the trimotor crash at Moose Creek. **Cynthia Lusk** (RAC-87) finished the Tevis Race (100-mile across the Sierras last July) and got the Tevis belt buckle she's dreamed of since childhood. Her devoted husband, **Scott Lusk** (FBX-81), and their three children watched, having been awake all night tracking her progress. I think that makes three smokejumpers who have the Tevis (Western States 100) buckles. This is quite an accomplishment since the completion rate this year was around 45%. She had a fantastic day and ride.”

Gary G. Johnson (FBX-74): Referring to his article in the Jan. 2006 edition of *Smokejumper*—“I left out **Nick Caples** (MYC-01) as one of the firefighters I helped get into jumping.” Gary also notes a large number of jumpers have come out of Sandpoint, Idaho. They include: **Al Cramer** (MSO-43), **Jim Thompson** (MSO)-63), **Kevin Brown** (MSO-66), **Steve Walker** (MSO-68), **Mike Boeck** (IDC-69), **Dewayne Fields** (NIFC-70), **Doug Abromeit** (MYC-71),

Dann Hall (ANC-71), **John Snedden** (NIFC-73), **Gary G. Johnson** (FBX-74), **John Olson** (FBX-77), **Jim S. Olson** ((FBX-78), **Kim Keaton** (FBX-79), **Scott Chehock** (MSO-82) and **Kip Shields** (FBX-04).

Karl Hartzell (BOI-70): "I just finished reading your latest effort, the January 2006 issue of *Smokeyjumper*. Summing all pieces to cumulative effect, I can say I enjoyed this issue more than any other I have read in the last three years. I particularly appreciated reading about the Russian smokejumping and rappelling program. Very informative and a well-written article. The rest of the stories were almost of equal interest to me."

Ray Lahr (CJ-47): "I was very touched by the wonderful story about **Danny On** (Jan. 2006 *Smokeyjumper*). I was unaware of his death. My only summer as a smokejumper was 1947. That put me in the first class of smokejumpers trained at Cave Junction. Danny was one of the veterans. He was all of the good things mentioned in the article, plus being an avid archer. He was very accomplished at making bows as he had studied the techniques of the Asian archers that made them such formidable foes in the days of Genghis Khan. During the previous summer of '46, Danny set aside some fresh yew and lemon wood to age for a year. When some of us expressed an interest in archery, Danny set up the bow-building class of '47. It took the better part of the summer for us to build our bows. My Danny On-tutored bow hangs proudly above my desk in my study. He stands out in my mind as a real gentleman."

Chuck Sheley (CJ-59): If there are any **Life Members** out there who have lost or worn out their Life Member caps, I would be glad to send a replacement. Cost is \$10 payable to NSA and mailed to me. Contact info on page three.

As I was reading the December 19, 2005, issue of *Time* magazine, I came across "Denis Breslin, a spokesman for the Allied Pilots Association" quoted in the article about the fatal shooting in the Miami Airport. The unique spelling of

the first name and an unusual last name stood out. Could this be **Denis Breslin** (NCSB-69)? A quick email to Denis confirmed that he's the guy. "Yes that's me. Several issues on the burner lately, one of them being the Federal Air Marshall shooting in Miami on the American Airlines jet bridge, and the other was the TSA relaxing rules on 'sharp objects.' I've talked to Time about both, but don't remember which quote they used. I spend quite a bit of time talking to reporters about issues affecting American Airline pilots. I'm a B777 captain based in LAX but spend most of my time at the Allied Pilots Association headquarters in Dallas/Fort Worth as the Communications Chairman."

Pic Littell (MSO-44): "Congratulations on the new issue of *Smokeyjumper*. I especially enjoyed the account of the contacts with Russian smokejumpers."

Shortly after my first arrival on assignment to the American Embassy in Moscow in 1956, the first International Parachute Jumping Competition was held at Pushkino Airport near Moscow, and I went out to see what was going on. One of the American Team members was a smokejumper from Missoula, whose name I forget. Also present was Joe Crane, President of the NPJA (National Parachute Jumpers Association) of which I was a member. Another important figure in parachuting, Jacques Istel, was also there. I had met him in Missoula, where he spent several days observing the performance of the Derry slotted Irwin chutes we were using. He used the slot in developing sport parachutes at that time.

When the Russian jumpers met me and learned that a former smokejumper was stationed at the American Embassy in Moscow, they invited me to come out to Pushkino to jump with them. However, this was shortly after the death of Stalin and things were still very tight and controlled. So, after a few minutes, the Soviet jumper who had invited me came back and, somewhat embarrassed, withdrew the invitation, saying it would be a big problem for them if an American diplomat were injured while jumping with them. Of course, this came as no surprise to me, given the status of US-Soviet relations at the time.

Unfortunately, when I was back in Moscow on my second assignment as Counselor for Public Affairs on the Embassy staff from 1979-83, the attempts at contact begun in 1984 by Bruce Ford and Wayne Williams had not yet been made nor was I aware of them. Whether I could have assisted in making contacts at any point during my two assignments is questionable, but I was pleased and interested to read about how they have developed in more recent years."

From the website: **John Berry** (RAC-70) retired January 3, 2006 from the El Dorado NF. John was Forest Supervisor from July 1999 to his retirement. John's 31-year career in the Forest Service included Forest Hydrologist (Nicolet and Salmon NF), District Ranger (Powers, Clackamas, and Clackamas River RD's), as well as a smokejumper at the Redmond Air Center.



1947 photo of Wally Dobbins (closest) and two unidentified jumpers in Tri-motor.
(Courtesy of Bert Collins)

"I am the luckiest man in the world. I have had the three 'dream jobs' in the Forest Service (Smokejumper, District Ranger, and Forest Supervisor)".

Chuck Mansfield (CJ-59): "The story about Danny On has twists and turns that keep unfolding. I knew Danny when I was around 10 or 12 year old. He needed to store his reloading equipment at our house in Grants Pass because the FS was a bit touchy on the subject. Dad volunteered to store his equipment in our basement (on the condition that dad could do some reloading). That summer Danny came to our house several times to do some reloading. I was impressed with a Chinese-American that was taller than my dad. We received small gifts from Danny for a couple of years. One of these was a jar of ginger that Danny purchased in San Francisco. Mom was able to "stretch" the ginger for several months with careful rationing."

Bill Moody (NCSB-57): "I have contacted NCSB and potential reunion committee members and have agreed to host the NCSB Reunion September 7-9, 2007. More details later. Mark the date."

I missed his phone call but got the message from **Davis Perkins** (NCSB-72). Davis is upping his NSA membership to the Life Member status. This is very important to the long-range operation of the NSA, and we appreciate all of you who have made this commitment. Davis is still working as a firefighter-paramedic in San Rafael, California, and looks forward to retirement in a couple years.

Speaking of Life Members, I want to note the addition of **Troop Emonds** (CJ-66), **Dave Hemry** (MYC-64), **Warren Pattison** (NCSB-53), **Art Jukkala** (MSO-56) and **Jack Benton** (MSO-59) to the Life membership since the list was published in the January issue. Thanks gentlemen for your support.

Bruce Ford (MSO-75) gave us a super bit of journalism with "Fire and Ice: Russian Smokejumpers" published in the January 2006 issue of *Smokejumper*. Bruce has followed that excellent piece with "Russian Smokejumpers: The Pre-War Years" that will be printed in the July issue. In addition, Bruce has put me in contact with Base Manager, Valery Korotkov, who has sent many pictures of the Russian program. Look for some of those pictures and some interesting smokejumping history in future issues.

The 4th **International Workshop On Documentary Making** In Italy & Europe - 4 days of screenings and discussions took place in Bardonecchia, near Turin, 12th - 15th July 2000. The closing treat on Saturday evening was **Werner Herzog's Little Dieter Needs To Fly**. An astonishing story of a German, naturalized as a U.S. citizen, who fulfils his dream of becoming a pilot by joining the U.S. Navy during the Vietnam War. Herzog's beautiful documentary recounts the story of Dieter Dengler as he is shot down by the Viet Cong, captured, escapes, is recaptured and tortured, and escapes once again. Dengler relives his traumatic story that is filmed in Herzog's trademark poetic style. **Gene DeBruin** (MSO-59) was also involved in the escape. Gene, a crewmember in an Air America C-46, was shot down September 5, 1963, and is still missing.

In the Air America C-46 shoot down over Laos, **Gene**

DeBruin (MSO-59) and NSA Associate Life Member **Phisit Intharthat** and three others parachuted from the aircraft before it exploded. DeBruin's story has been published in the October 1995 and January 1996 issues of the *Static Line* as well as the April 2001 issue of *Smokejumper*. After viewing Werner Herzog's *Little Dieter Needs To Fly* via my Netflix subscription, I had a feeling that there was much more of the story that remained to be told. I contacted **Fred Rohrbach** (MSO-65), who personally knows Phisit Intharthat as well as USN pilot Dieter Dengler. Fred sent me a 52-page record from Phisit for my personal information and not to be printed. Fred, who seems to spend half of the year in Vietnam, phoned later and said that Phisit had given the "go ahead" to print his story.

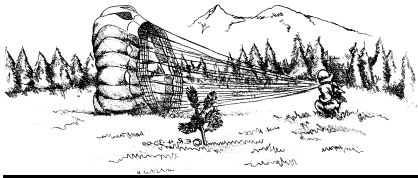
I have read those 52 pages about an account of four years spent as a POW in the harshest conditions imaginable. Now I need to edit and put it into a two-part story for *Smokejumper*. When that gets done you will be able to read a first hand story of what I think reflects courage and determination beyond belief. I couldn't stop thinking about it for days after reading the text. Now to condense 55,000 words into 8,000 without losing the feel and thought of this incredible story. If Phisit were an American, this would have been a movie. In any case, look for it down the line.

Jerry DeBruin (Associate): "You probably know that Werner Herzog has produced a movie based on (Dieter) Dengler's book 'Escape From Laos.' Dengler is played by Batman Christian Bale, Duane Martin by Steve Zahn and Gene by Jeremy Davis. The movie is entitled 'Rescue Dawn.' Was filmed this past summer in Thailand and is scheduled to be out this summer."

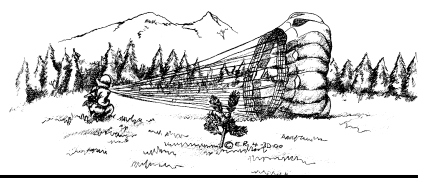
Got a phone call from **Glenn Hale** (MYC-57) inquiring about getting a couple NSA caps. Glenn is heading back to New York for a ceremony honoring stem cell donors. Glenn is being treated for leukemia and was the recipient of a donation from a NY fireman. Glenn is taking a couple NSA caps back for the ceremony. We all wish Glenn the best in his treatment.

In 2002 NSA board member, **Ted Burgon** (IDC-52), was killed in an ambush of a group of teachers on a staff outing near the Feepport Mine in Indonesia's Papua province. From BBC News, Jakarta: "Police in Indonesia's Papua province have detained 12 people over the 2002 murder of two American schoolteachers and their Indonesian companion. Local police said they suspected that all 12 detainees were members of the separatist Free Papua Movement. Human rights groups have consistently said they suspected that the Indonesian military was involved in the killings. But they say that such allegations have never been properly followed up. They have confirmed, however, that Antonious Wamang, who was indicted by a United States grand jury in 2004 following a lengthy FBI investigation, is among those being held."

Jason Greenlee (RDD-99) and **Dawn Greenlee** (MSO-00) have moved from Florida to Hawaii. Dawn works for the Dept. of Fish and Wildlife and Jason works for the Army, dealing with fire problems in their training areas. 🐼



Checking the Canopy



Jim Cherry
(Missoula '57)

Life-Changing Events

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

APRIL 2, 2005, I HAD a heart attack. It came without any of the warning signs. I will always remember the date as it was the same day Pope John Paul died.

It started about 0700 as I was carrying tools into the house my son and I were building. All week I had been going up and down steps and ladders with no problem. Now the heavy, squeezing pressure in the chest was my first indication. I went back to my son's home, took an aspirin and drove to the hospital ER, arriving there by 0720. At 0830 I was being transferred by ambulance to a major regional hospital and moved directly into the "cath" lab at 0900. By 1045 I was resting comfortably in a hospital room with three stents in my heart and no heart muscle damage. I was lucky. I've heard that roughly 50% of heart attacks come with sudden death as the first indication.

This was a life-changing event. Diet, weight control, activity level, medications have all become top issues that will shape my life from now on. In addition, there is always in the back of my mind, "Will there

be a second event, and, if so, will I be lucky enough to be in the right place at the right time?" I cannot, I will not allow that possibility to control and cripple my life. That could be a fate more terrible than death. That's a lesson I learned years earlier.

That earlier life-changing event happened in 1959. Upon coming off the four-man Fuzzy Creek #2 fire on the St. Joe N.F. I learned that **Jon Rolf** (MSO-57) and **Gary Williams** (MSO-59) had died in the crash of a Ford Tri-motor as it attempted a landing at Moose Creek R.S. on August 4, 1959. One of the Missoula jumpers that had been witness to the crash and had gone to the aid of the victims told me that Jon had asked him to pray for him and sing to him. Although I hadn't known Gary, I had trained with Jon in 1957 and held him in highest regard as a man of faith and a gentleman. I was deeply moved.

As the days went by a profound sense of fear took hold of me. Death had come quickly and in a manner over which there was no control. The realization that I could die in the line of jumper duty became increasingly real to the point of nearly paralyzing me from making my next fire jump on August 8, the 16-man Warm Springs Fire on the Salmon N.F. Things didn't get any easier with the fear factor on August 17, 1959, when I jumped the 40-man Hat Creek Fire on the Salmon N.F. and an additional 300 firefighters were walked in. The Yellowstone earthquake hit that night and created a landslide that buried an unknown number of unsuspecting victims. Some along

our fire line felt the quake that night as they rested.

Following the summer this newfound fear caused me to be troubled by a question that kept coming to mind... "If I am a Christian then why am I so afraid of the possibility of death?" The struggle with that question continued over the months and years ahead. Eventually it was one of the major factors that led me to a decision to enter the seminary in 1961.

A sense of peace and understanding was slow in coming but I eventually came to know that there are things far worse than death. I believe that death does not have the final say. My faith gives me the assurance that I am held secure in the safe keeping of God who loves me in spite of what might happen to this body... and that knowledge is sufficient to give me courage to face both life and death with confidence and hope.

The prophet Micah reminds us that we are called to "do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God" (Micah 6:8). I believe that. I believe we are called to move beyond fear, to trust God, to live our lives to the fullest in service to others and to care for the creation that has been given to our stewardship... and to the extent we live that way it will produce life-changing events in each of us. 🙏

Jim is a retired Lutheran pastor living in Iowa. He is an occasional contributor to Smokejumper, NSA Life Member, NSA Board member and participant in the NSA Trails Crews. jjcherry@netins.net

Losing An Old Friend

by Jim Allen (NCSB-46)

Orville C. Looper (CJ-49) was my good friend for many years. He was only of average height and weight. What made him stand out were his broad shoulders, his friendly smile, and his rugged appearance. (The tattoos that he got, while in the navy, were also eye catching!).

I first met Orv in the early 1950s. I was stationed at the North Cascades Smokejumper Base, and the fire season was normally over around the first part of September. Any jumper there, who wanted to, was sent to the Siskiyou Smokejumper Base in Cave Junction to finish the season. I went to Cave Junction, where Orv was a squadleader, in 1951 and 1952.

Orv, **Phil Clarke** (CJ-51) and I jumped the last fire of 1952 out of C.J. It was October 1, the Mule Creek Fire on the Siskiyou near the Rogue River. It was very near the main road in that area and was a couple acres when they called for jumpers. Foreman **Cliff Marshall** (CJ-46) was the spotter and Ed Scholz was pilot of the Noorduyt Norseman.

When we got to the fire, Cliff spotted Looper first in a ravine near the fire that had a few small trees and heavy underbrush. Then Phil and I jumped together. Cliff told us our spot was just above the main road in a patch of second growth. Phil did as he was told and went into the trees. I took the easy way and headed for the road. I landed in the road and rolled up against a milepost sign. (No recollection about the mileage number posted on the sign). I was just happy that there was no traffic at the time!

I rolled up my chute, packed up my gear and headed to where Orv landed. Orv had hit a down log after crashing down through the trees and had suffered a badly sprained ankle. We took care of the ankle and his gear and got him settled, and then I headed for the fire where I met Phil. A crew of loggers was already there and building fireline. They were a great crew and really good workers, and by later that evening the fire was under control and mostly mopped up. We were relieved the next day and transported back to the Aerial Project. Orv was taken to the doctor and spent the next several days on crutches. That was the one and only fire Orv and I ever jumped together.

In July of the following year, 1953, Cliff Marshall had resigned as foreman of the crew and I was selected to take his place. When I got to Cave Junction, I found out that the squadleaders were **Bill Padden** (CJ-48), **Rod Newton** (CJ-51) and **Danny On** (CJ-46). I asked about Orv and was told that he and Cliff Marshall had a "falling out" and that Orv had quit and was driving a logging truck in the Wolf Creek area. Orv's wife Charlotte, who was the clerk at the base, told me she was sure that Orv would like to return to the base. I discussed the possibility of his return with the squadleaders and the Siskiyou Fire Control Officer, J.R. Philbrick. All of them said it would be a benefit to the base to have him back. I agreed and Orv was rehired soon after that. I was always thankful that he did return. I was in a new job and knew very few of the jumper personnel, the forest dispatchers or other personnel.

Thanks to Orv and Charlotte I was able to make it through the first year with only a few ulcers! Orv was the only one of the squadleaders who was available to work yearlong. He was the most qualified and became my principle assistant and was given a yearlong civil service appointment.

Orv and I worked well together. We also went deer hunting, elk hunting, salmon and steelhead fishing together during the off-season. Consequently, we became very close friends!

When the new smokejumper base in Redding, California, was opened, Orv applied for the foreman's position. **Fred Barnowsky** (MSO-42) was hired as the foreman and Orv was offered the assistant foreman position. He took the assistant position and transferred to Redding in the spring of 1957. In 1959 Orv applied to the BLM in Alaska as Base Manager for their new smokejumper base in Fairbanks. He was hired and stayed there until the spring of 1966, when he transferred to Winnemucca, Nevada.

I had transferred to the Redmond Air Center in the spring of 1966 and Orv and Charlotte stopped for a visit in Redmond on their way from Fairbanks to Winnemucca. It was a complete surprise to me that they had left Fairbanks. Orv had taken up golf in Fairbanks, and I had joined the Redmond Juniper Golf Club. From then on we spent a lot of time together playing golf during the off-season. He came to Redmond almost every fall to play in our best-ball tournament, and I went to Winnemucca a few times to play in the Winnemucca tournaments.

Orv called me in the fall of 2001 to tell me that, after a lengthy illness, Charlotte had passed away. It was a sad time for both of us. I will always remember how much she helped me when I first arrived at Cave Junction.

Of course, Orv was devastated to lose her. She was one of a kind!

For several years after Charlotte's death, I didn't see much of Orv except at smokejumper reunions. He and his second wife, Millie, had moved from Winnemucca to Redding and then to Port Orford. They sold their homes in Winnemucca and Redding and purchased a home in Port Orford. So, for a few years, they were busy moving.

Orv and I did keep in touch through the internet for quite a while after they moved to Port Orford. For a time I didn't hear anything from him and then I got the word from his son, Roger, that Orv was seriously ill. I called and talked to him and he sounded like his old self. Then Roger notified me the next day that he had died during the night, a few hours after I talked to him. He was a good friend, and I have lots of great memories of the years and times we spent together. He will be missed by me and, also, by his many friends and associates! 🙏



Orv Looper (NSA file)

Mountain Jumping—Part II

by Mike Durtschi (Fairbanks '79)

When Lee Englesby (FBX-77) and I were 15 we threw our ski boots in a knapsack, put on our tennis shoes and, with skis on our shoulders, climbed Mount Hood in Oregon's Cascade Mountains. En route we passed a guided climbing group that was roped-up using crampons and ice axes and carrying big backpacks. We didn't see what all the fuss over gear was about. It was a beautiful, clear cool and sunny spring day. Someone had conveniently chopped steps into the steep pitch leading to the mountain summit that were perfectly suited to our tennis shoes. I likened it to walking up an extremely long staircase. To the guides chagrin we continued on. The view from the top was incredible and, with just tennis shoes in our knapsacks, we were unencumbered with gear for the 5000 foot vertical ski run down to Timberline Lodge. What a blast! The year was 1969.

My goal in learning to sky dive was to enable me to jump to mountain tops and enjoy the ski run down. After sky diving school, I had the skill. Next I needed a sport rig. Several jumpers were buying new rigs, so I joined them. We got a group price and were able to choose colors, containers, and main and reserve canopies. I picked my favorite colors and paid extra for a ram-air reserve. I figured where I was going, a reserve ride had to get you to the same place you had been headed with the main.

The gear arrived in Fairbanks after I had gone home for the winter. **Ron Lund** (FBX-64) picked it up and assembled it for me, inspecting and packing both the main and the reserve. It was great having someone I trusted get it all set up. Ron brought the outfit to Perris Valley, California, where a group of Fairbanks jumpers had come for a week of sky diving. I came along and they made me take lessons to improve my mid-air docking skills. I tried hard but still managed to breakup my share of formations. It was all fun and a real learning experience. Back in Alaska the next summer, I scrounged all the jumps I could with the military, sport clubs, and departing off-contract fire aircraft. Before long I had a couple hundred freefalls and felt pretty comfortable and confident. I still had not made a mountain jump.

The summer of '83 I determined to find a job and spend the winter in Alaska. During the job search I interviewed for a ski coaching position in the little town of Girdwood. I looked at the mountains, the snow, the little dirt airstrip with an active skydiving club and said to myself, "This is it." That winter I met Bob Johns, the owner of the Girdwood Drop Zone. His real job was running a surveying firm. He was an avid Master's class ski racer in need of some racing tips to improve his time. I possessed the racing tips but was in need of a pilot and airplane with an in-flight door. Only in Alaska do you find skydiving planes with in-flight doors. Most people skydive in warm places where the wind rushing through an open door is desirable. An in-flight door for

mountain jumping is an advantage as it allows you to dress for the activity rather than just survive the plane ride. Our relationship became mutually beneficial.

That spring, Bob took me up for my first mountain jump. We targeted the late winter/early spring for the longer days, milder temperatures, deep snowpack and full avalanche chutes. Yup, full avalanche chutes. The coastal mountains of Alaska are lined with them, descending to valley bottoms beneath every ridge and peak that collects snow. They are a danger zone but only when an avalanche is in progress. Otherwise, they make dandy little ski runs that let you ski out from higher peaks without the hassle of bushwacking.

That first jump was on a ridge above the Seward Highway between Girdwood and Anchorage. The ski run came out to an old logging road in the Bird Creek Valley, where friend and fellow ski coach **John Gould** (FBX-81) had left my car. Before we took off I had duck-taped my skis and poles together and rigged a small 8-foot cargo chute to them to assure they would be in one piece when I needed



Rob Jones (Courtesy Mike Durtschi)

them. I wore ski clothes including boots, gloves, helmet, goggles, and a sport rig. Tucked in my jacket was a can of chew for nutrition in case I was longer on the mountain than anticipated, plus a radio to talk to Bob once on the snow. Bob flew over the drop spot as I tied the static line from the cargo chute to the seat leg and held the whole ski package out the door on final and let it go. The cargo chute opened quickly and plopped those skis on the snow just as pretty as you please. We climbed to altitude; I jumped, doing a couple somersaults, got flat and stable, dumped my chute, and spiraled right down to the skis. There I stood on the mountaintop in the evening light and silence and watched the plane fly back to Girdwood. What was I going to do, sit there and talk to myself about how cool this was? I got busy repacking my parachute. I untaped my skis and poles, repacked the cargo chute, strapped it to my rig, stepped into my skis and headed down the hill. The ski down was good, not an epic powder run, but good skiing.

The first two mountain jumps I made were solo, but I thought it would be a good idea to get someone to go along. Besides the safety factor, it would be great to share this experience and have someone to substantiate the stories. The pool of eligible candidates was pretty lean, given the requirements. As luck would have it, the perfect partner was close at hand.

Rob Jones (FBX-81) had joined a military sport club on Fort Wainwright right after his rookie year and had been picking up skydives with the rest of us. He had recently purchased a used ram-air sport rig from one of the other jumpers, so he had his own gear. He was living and working in Anchorage with a flexible schedule. His toughness and "can do" attitude were legendary and he wanted to do it.

I would like to recount two stories that attest to Rob's fortitude and character. The first took place in the high mountains of Nevada on a fire jump as part of the BLM's Great Basin Project. Rob was coming in hot when at the last minute, as he turned to miss some boulders, his parachute oscillated so severely he landed flat-out and face first. One of the other jumpers that watched him hit said he bounced high enough to see daylight under him. **Mike Clarkson** (RAC-65), Rob's JP, thinking he had a medevac on his hands, rushed over in time to see Rob get up, dust himself off, grab his gear and go to work. The other instance involved activities the night before a class of rookies made their first jump. After the official ceremony, where all the rookies were taken down to the units and given a good talking to by Big Ernie, a.k.a. **Tony Beltran** (IDC-69), and shown the graves they were going to occupy as a result of the following days parachute jump, Rob had the whole class of rookies in the barracks, instructing them on how to put their heads through the sheetrock walls without hitting the studs. It was brought to his attention that, while this activity might be appropriate, the results were rather damaging. Rob, being a person with many skills, had the whole scene fixed by roll call.

When spring rolled around again, I gave Rob a call. Our first jump that year was the best snow we ever encountered mountain jumping. The winter snowpack had settled in good and hard. Then came a late storm that dumped another 10" of light dry snow. The temperature held in the

low 20s, with calm winds and lots of sunshine. Bob took us over Sunrise Peak off the Hope Highway. We chalked up 5000' vertical of untracked fluff, top to bottom. Our next jump was over Blueberry Hill. We knew the ski on this one was safe because the Alaska Railroad had dropped charges on the slope after the last snowfall a couple days prior. The train tracks run at the base of the mountain next to the Seward Highway. By this date the snow had turned to spring corn and the only snow that made it to the road was in the avalanche chutes.

We came back to Blueberry Hill later on, not so much for the skiing but for its topography. Bob had been hearing through his skydive channels that guys had been modifying their ram-air parachutes to give them more lift, then running off of hilltops and gliding to the bottom. After a couple test runs off the ski slopes at Girdwood, Bob got someone else to fly the plane and he and I jumped Blueberry Hill to try a launch off the top. Here was all the fun of making a skydive, plus you didn't have to pack your parachute to get off the mountain. It took a little experimentation, but we figured out that by pulling down on the front risers, as you began to slide down the hill on your skis, the ram-air would pop right up over your head. As you picked up speed and the angle of the slope became greater than the glide angle of your parachute, you would "take-off." Blueberry Hill is special for this kind of thing because the upper slope is gentle and just steep enough to get airborne and be about 50' off the ground when you come to a cliff band that drops precipitously to the ocean 4000' below. It is pretty exciting.

My last mountain jump was in the spring of 1987. Three of us were hanging out at the Drop Zone on a slow Saturday morning. We decided to get our skis and jump Max's Mountain, a 3000' peak perched right above the ski hill in Girdwood. Like Blueberry Hill, it started gentle then broke off at a cliff band to plunge down to the parking lot. We landed on top, strapped on our skis, and launched off the side. It was late May and, while there was plenty of snow on the peak, there were only a couple small patches of snow at the bottom. I chose one that was right in front of the bar at the base of the lifts. As I lined up on it, I swooped passed a guy washing the big picture windows and startled the bejeebers out of him. He took a look at the parachute and the skis as I skidded to a stop and wanted to know where I had come from. Instead of trying to explain, I just pointed and said, "Off of Max." You could tell it wasn't exactly coming clear to him.

Life events and choices conspired to put sky diving and mountain jumping on the back burner after that. Since then I have built a house at the end of the runway in Girdwood, the skydiving club has moved out to the Matanuska Valley, and Bob sold his plane. I guess it was just one of those things that came together: the right place, the right people, and the right time. As I sit here writing, I am looking out at those same mountains. I still have my sport rig, and the first snows of winter have dusted the peaks. Maybe I'll get back up there? 🏔️

Mike can be reached at PO Box 1012, Girdwood, AK 99587 or via email at bmdurt@alaska.netabase



NSA Trail Crew



Life After Smokejumping?

by Steve Goldammer (Missoula '66)

WE SAT AROUND THE CAMPFIRE telling stories, as jumpers do, when somebody yelled, "Get away from **(Jim) Deeds** (MSO-64)." He was our resident smoke-magnet and, no matter on what side of the fire he stood, he would always attract smoke. As our laughter subsided and we took a moment to calm down, **Jack Deeds** (MSO-65) said, "Hey, why don't we sit around the campfire and each of us tell a little bit about our lives after smokejumping?" And so the stories poured out, one incredible epic after another. Questions were asked of each person, histories unfolding, and each saga filled with the very stuff of which a full and rich life is made.

But I digress. The event that I am talking about was the 2005 NSA Trails Project, and if I am starting to sound like an advertisement, it's because I am. It was terrific with a capital "T." We were part of the West Fork Teton Cabin Crew, assigned to clear trails on the east side of the Bob Marshall Wilderness Area.

So what more can you ask for? There was the beauty of

the area, a project that people appreciated, working with a bunch of wily smokejumpers and yes, of course, the stories. It was being able to step into the past, become a young man again, feel what it was to be a jumper. It was like I had never left. But back to the campfire and the stories.

Life after smokejumping? As these life stories came bubbling out there was this common thread that kept appearing in each one of them. The experience we each had as jumpers colored the very future that each one of us was going to have. Whether it was enlisting in the airborne, becoming an architect for the Forest Service, working for the FBI, or returning to the jumpers to break the record for the longest time between fire jumps, jumping had left an indelible mark on our lives. Personally, I believe that I could not have been a pilot in the Navy had it not been for that jumping experience in my file and the lessons in perseverance that it taught me. It was jumping that introduced me to my love affair with flying, as it was there that I experienced my first eight takeoffs in an airplane without ever landing. The very fact that nine others and I gathered in that camp those nights in July, telling stories of our lives, bears credence to the fact that "Life After Smokejumping" is an oxymoron. There is no life after smokejumping. Simply put, you will always be a jumper!

Jack and Jim (Deeds), I am still at Trixis. When are you coming back? Are you boys still smoke-j-j-jumpers? **John Walden** (MSO-65), you're the best political friend I've ever

had! **Bob Reid** (MSO-57), I'm going after your jump record, if any smokejumper base will hire me. **John Payne** (MSO-66), you are the man, the G-man, The Good Man that is! **Neil Satterwhite** (MYC-65), no bears in Idaho comin' near you. Hang in there. And **Jim Snapp** (MSO-65), I agree with you in theory, but I'm committed to ethanol.

I don't know how many of you know **Jon McBride** (MSO-54) or what he does for us. We all owe Jon a debt of gratitude for his tireless, time consuming, dedication in organizing the Trails Project. He is truly amazing! If there isn't a trail named after him, it would be a fitting and appropriate thing to do to recognize his efforts. The work done by Jon for forests and the National Smokejumper Association is simply incredible. Well done, and thank you! 🍄



L-R: Steve Goldammer, John Payne, Jim Deeds, Jack Deeds, Neil Satterwhite, John Walden and Bob Reid.
(Courtesy S. Goldammer)

Memories

by Tom McGrath (Missoula '57)

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

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

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

Avgas fumes
Engines' roar
Pattee Canyon
out the door.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Help Needed on Membership Project

Since the NSA was formed nearly twelve years ago, one of the front-running tasks has been to gain and keep members. We now have approximately 1700 members, but there are another 1700 ex-jumpers that the NSA cannot locate.

NSA's Membership Chairman, **John McDaniel** (CJ-57), invites any member who is computer literate to join him in a one-year ef-

fort to locate the 1700 "missing" jumpers. Using a computer search engine(s) and your free time, a search will commence on or about May 2006.

The names, based on rookie training base, will be parceled out and each volunteer will be responsible for his/her own segment. The size of the segments will depend on the number of volunteers. Any volunteer who sees the search

through to the end will receive a one-year extension to their membership.

If you are interested in helping the NSA expand its membership, you are invited to contact John at jumpercj57@hotmail.com to get your name on the list and receive specific instructions. The more volunteers we get, the easier this task will be. 🙏

**22 Are Going!
8 More Needed**

Special Announcement NSA Vietnam Tour

When: January, 2007 How Long: 11 days

Cost: \$2,950 per person - Twin sharing hotel room

Itinerary:

- Day 1 - Depart Seattle EVA Airlines, 747-400, refuel Taipei, Taiwan then Ho-Chi-Minh City (formerly Saigon)
- Day 2 - Arrive Ho-Chi-Minh City about noon and rest
- Day 3 - Tour re-unification palace (formerly Independence Palace) and War Remnants museum
- Day 4 - Tour Cu-Chi tunnels - former bastion of Viet Cong, close to Saigon
- Day 5 - Depart to Da-Nang by air, rest, stay Furama Resort on China Beach
- Day 6 - Tour Marble Mountain and historic town of Hoi-An near China Beach, another night at Furama Resort
- Day 7 - Drive to Hue, cultural capitol of Vietnam via scenic Hai-Van Pass, visit historic Thien-Mu Pagoda
- Day 8 - Tour citadel in Hue and old Emperors tombs
- Day 9 - Depart for Ho-Chi-Minh City by air
- Day 10 - At leisure in Ho-Chi-Minh City
- Day 11 - Depart for Seattle via Eva Airline and arrive same day

Included in cost:

- All airfare both transpacific and in Vietnam
- All ground transportation according to tour
- All meals - Breakfast, lunch and dinner
- All hotels - will be five star hotels in Saigon and Da-Nang and three star hotel in Hue for two nights
- Guide service - three guides for 30-person group
- Travel insurance to include medical evacuation, lost baggage, etc.

Not Included:

- All personal expenses - laundry, telephone, etc.
- All beverages - soda or alcohol
- Tips and unspecified meals
- Any side trips or transportation at your expense
- This tour is limited to first 32 people and twin sharing hotel rooms.

Other Information:

- Tour will be led by **Fred Rohrbach** (MSO-65) a Vietnam veteran.
- Fred is currently a businessman with 30 years experience in Asia and Vietnam. He has traveled Vietnam extensively since 1975 and has co-authored the first picture book on Vietnam by an American in 1988.

Interested:

- Contact Fred at 206-574-3300, Mon - Fri and specify NSA tour when calling or email at pollynfred@comcast.net.
- Note - Prices such as airfare and hotels could increase by Jan. 2007 but would be minimal, if at all. **We need to have 30 people to make this group. May 30, 2006, deadline. Contact Fred if you are interested.**

North Cascades Smokejumper Base 2007 Reunion Sept. 7-9, 2007

The reunion committee is requesting help in obtaining addresses of Jumpers, Pilots and Admin/Messhall staff. Please send us your current mailing address and e-mail address as well as addresses of other NCSB personnel. On your e-mail indicate "ADDRESS" in the subject line to help Mike with the sorting.

Mail to: Mike Fort
32 Thurlow Road
Twisp, Washington 98856
e-mail: fortmd@methow.com

Registration information to be mailed in winter 2007
Bill Moody – Reunion Coordinator
PO Box 262
Twisp, WA 98856
e-mail: bmoody8@centurytel.net

Blast from the Past

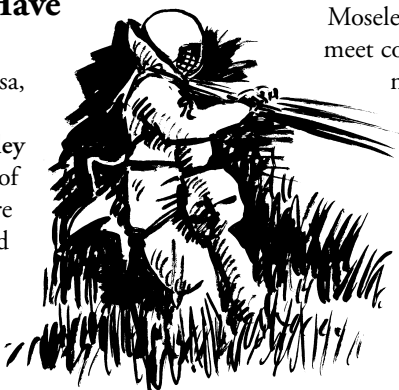
Former Alabama Track Stars Have Led Adventurous Lives

by Delbert Reed (*Northport Gazette* Tuscaloosa,
Alabama August 2004)

The last time I talked with **Charley Moseley** (CJ-62)—before this week—he was dreaming of a spot in the summer Olympic games. We were both just kids then, it seems now, easily excited by the hopes, dreams and fairy tales of youth.

It was May of 1963, and Moseley was nothing short of sensational as a senior on the University of Alabama track team. He was headed to his last Southeastern Conference meet, then to a series of national meets with the goal of going to the National Decathlon Championships before beginning training for the 1964 Olympics.

John F. Kennedy was president. It was before the assassinations of JFK, RFK and MLK; before Woodstock; before Hippies and the protests. The Vietnam War was only a small blip on the radar screen. It truly was Camelot—a happy-ever-after world. Few people had any doubt that Moseley, who had set a pile of records at Alabama and in SEC competition, would fulfill his dream. After all, he had scored 69 points as a sophomore and 107 as a junior while setting an SEC record of 24-9 in the long jump.



Moseley was unbeaten in four separate events in dual meet competition and had scored 147 points as a senior (beating the school record he set as a junior), including scoring 30 points in one meet by taking first place in six individual events. He was among the nation's best in several events and appeared to be a sure bet for national honors. Then life happened. A pulled groin muscle later that summer doomed Moseley's Olympic decathlon hopes, and he walked away from track for good when he finished sixth in the National AAU meet in late June.

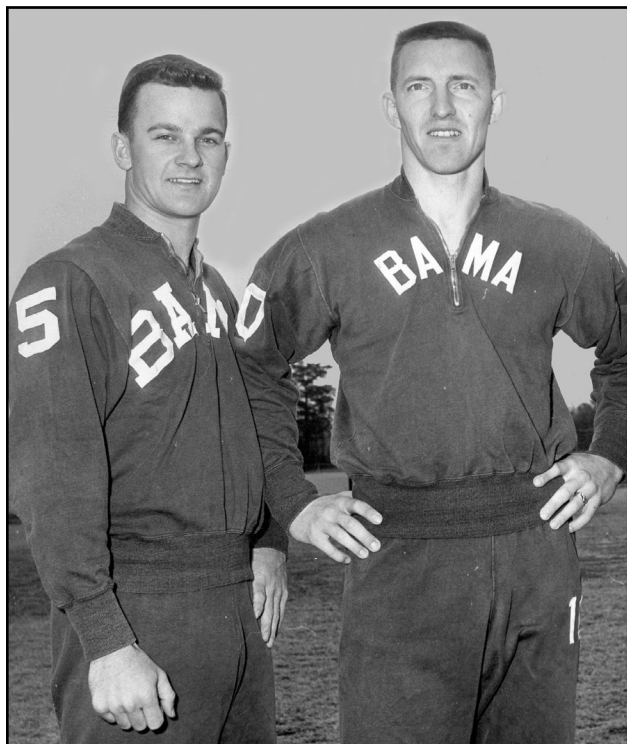
"It was very depressing to realize that your career is over," Moseley admitted as we talked about that long-ago Olympic dream on Monday of this week as he visited friends in Tuscaloosa. But Moseley didn't let the setback get him down. Instead, he accepted an even greater challenge by heading off to Oregon to work as a smokejumper, jumping out of airplanes into the forests of the Northwest to battle wildfires with tools alongside his younger brother **Billy** (CJ-63).

He spent three summers with the U. S. Forest Service as a smokejumper, and was joined there by former Alabama teammate **Johnny Kirkley** (CJ-64) of Northport (a 1961 Tuscaloosa County High graduate and an outstanding sprinter) in the summer of 1964. By late 1965, both of them and fellow smokejumper **Cliff Hamilton** (CJ-62) of California were working for Air America, a government agency supporting U. S. efforts—mainly the Central Intelligence Agency—in Southeast Asia.

They were employed as cargo crew on planes delivering supplies—ammunition, food, pigs, chickens, tents, men and whatever—to remote camps with tiny and sometimes no landing strips in remote areas of Laos, Vietnam and who knows where. The trick often was to push cargo out the back doors of the planes without falling out while the plane was twisting and turning its way out of the jungle, sometimes under fire from the enemy.

Moseley spent just over a year with Air America before returning to the University of Alabama to earn a law degree. By the time he earned his law degree, he had become disillusioned with the loopholes and technicalities of law—or fearful of the boredom of a desk job. So he headed off to Alaska in 1968 to chase another adventure. This time he hoped to cash in on the Alaska oil boom, but he ended up working as a smokejumper again for four years.

Kirkley spent four years with Air America, then returned to Alabama to complete his last semester of college and earn his degree before following Moseley to Alaska. Moseley didn't strike it rich in Alaska, but he did spend four more years as a smokejumper. Kirkley, meanwhile, started his own business



L-R: Johnny Kirkley and Charley Moseley (Courtesy J. Kirkley)

and saved enough money to move to Hawaii when their Alaskan adventure ended.

Moseley returned to the South and started a title insurance business, which included handling gas and oil leases. That job eventually brought him back to Tuscaloosa on occasion. He also worked in other Alabama locations and has been dealing mainly with oil and gas leases since 1978.

He now lives and works in Oklahoma. He has two daughters, who live in Mobile, and a son, John, who is in the Army as a member of the 101st Airborne Infantry Division and has seen action in Iraq and is due to return soon.

Moseley recently underwent heart bypass surgery, yet he seems hardly slowed by the ordeal. "It made me realize how precious life and friends are," he said of his surgery. "That's why I drove out here from Oklahoma to visit Johnny and Cliff."

Kirkley seems to have maintained his spirit of adventure even today. He is currently involved in a movement to restore independence to Hawaii, and he says the idea has more merit and support than the public yet realizes.

Moseley and Kirkley were roommates as well as teammates at Alabama and have remained close friends for more than four decades now, and on Monday they recalled fondly their days with the late Alabama track coach Harold "Red" Drew as they credited him with their collegiate track success.

A short time with Moseley and Kirkley reveals that they have to share the glory (or blame) for their adventurous lives. They are a different breed of men—men who became accustomed to living each day on the edge, facing dangerous if not always potentially deadly situations for years on end.

They laugh easily and loudly as they relate the adventures, disappointments and successes of their lives. And they readily admit that they've had more than their share of adventures.

I'd like to say that they're finally settling down now at age 60 and are ready to take life easy, but I simply cannot. Charley is still chasing oil and gas, looking for a gusher that makes him rich, and Johnny seems determined to pull Hawaii out of the United States. They make an old friend seated behind a desk feel like one of those "girly men" I've heard about. 🐾

My Retirement Rifle

by Gary R. Johnson (Redding '69)

I have been going Elk hunting in the Frank Church "River of No Return" Wilderness since 1997 with a close group of friends that include smokejumpers Doug Houston, Kevin Gilbert and Ash Court.

In the fall of 2005, the four of us went Elk hunting in the Middle Fork of the Salmon River. We flew into Indian Creek and spent 18 days hiking, climbing, and pushing snow up to our thighs. We harvested three bull Elk.

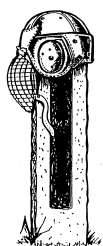
I retired from government service in 2003. The rifle I have been using for the last three years was a retirement gift from my fellow jumpers. It is a Winchester .270 cal. with a

3-9 Burris Scope. Until this past season ('05), I have been unsuccessful in harvesting an Elk with this new rifle. Well the "retirement" rifle now has blood on it. On the ninth day of our hunt, I was able to find and shoot a 5X5 bull. Along with Doug and Ash (Kevin had been successful each year till this year), we had lots of meat hanging in camp. We worked real hard but have full freezers.

Because the rifle I used was a gift from my fellow jumpers, I wanted to let them all know that I appreciate it and that it is being put to good use. 🐾



L-R: Gary R. Johnson (RDD-69), Doug Houston (RAC-73), Kevin Gilbert (LGD-79-standing), Ashley Court (NCSB-63). 82 years of jumping between the four.



Off The List

We want to know! If you learn of the serious illness or death of a member of the smokejumper community, whether or not he or she is a member, your Association wants to know about it. Please

phone, write or e-mail the editor (see contact information on page three of the magazine). We'll take it from there.

Daniel T. Lynch (North Cascades '58)

Dan died September 22, 2005, at his home in Oroville, Washington. He jumped at NCSB from 1958-60 and at Fairbanks from 1962-65. Dan served in the Army in Germany and worked for several years on the North Slope Oil Fields. He then worked as a professional hunting guide in Alaska for many years before retiring to Oroville. *Thanks to Bill Moody for this information.*

Wallace J. "Wally" Greentree (Missoula '53)

Wally died on May 28, 2005, while running the final mile of the Prince of Wales Marathon. His teammates carried his racing number the final 300 yards, thus finishing the race. The following was written by his daughter, Diane Greentree Tschirgi, appearing in the USFS *Sourdough Notes* Summer 2005 issue:

My Dad, Wally Greentree, was a man full of life. He started out as a smokejumper and ended as a marathoner and never slowed down in between. His Forest Service career began with a stint as a smoke jumper in Montana. He loved to tell us how the first 18 times he went up in an airplane, he never landed. He started college but dropped out for a while, forgetting there was a draft. He was quickly reminded when he was called up. He served two years in the Army from 1958-59. After returning home, he finished his forestry degree and took a job with the U.S. Forest Service in Berkeley, California.

(Later), he took a research job at a ranger district in Ft. Collins, Colorado in 1976. Tragedy struck in 1978 when his wife, Beth, died of cancer. Suddenly, Dad found himself the sole parent to three teenagers. He took it in stride, working full time, cooking and raising us kids. Sometimes he would bring me along on road trips, though I thought the lime green USFS vehicles were really uncool. We also went on a lot of hikes and camping trips as a family, though I must confess I didn't care to learn all the common and scientific names of all the plants and trees we saw. What I did enjoy was the obvious love he had for the outdoors, of which his work was an extension.

Dad took a position on the Tongass National Forest inventory in 1981. We started in Sitka, then moved on to Petersburg, and then to Ketchikan. That was a lot of moving for a teenager, but I got used to it and even did some moving on my own when I applied for and was accepted as a Rotary exchange student to the Philippines for a year. The Rotarians there really enjoyed referring to

my dad as "Forester Greentree."

I believe Dad's favorite job was in Thorne Bay, managing small timber sales. He retired in 1995, after 32 years with the USFS. He decided to stay in Thorne Bay and bought some property with a lot of old growth trees on Setter Lake. One of the first things he did was to inventory and catalogue his trees. Then clear all the underbrush. Then build some trails. After all that was done, he started building his house. I guess the priorities of an old forester are a little different from the rest of us "civilians." He never did finish that house, but he sure enjoyed living among the trees.

Orville C. Looper (Cave Junction '49)

Orv died December 6, 2005, in his home in Port Orford, Oregon. He served in the Navy during WWII as a Gunner's Mate 1st Class and was in the Battle of Midway. After the war he returned to Cave Junction and started his smokejumping career with the Forest Service in 1949. He jumped in Cave Junction from 1949 until 1957 when he transferred to Redding, California, as assistant to the smokejumper base manager. 1957 was the initial year of the Redding Base. In January 1959, he moved and helped open the BLM smokejumper base in Fairbanks, Alaska. Orv remained in Fairbanks until the spring of 1966 when he transferred to Winnemucca, Nevada, as a Fire Control Officer for the BLM. After he retired from the BLM in Winnemucca, he lived there for several years before moving to Redding, California, and then to Port Orford.

Lola A. Lufkin (Associate)

Lola, widow of pioneer smokejumper **Francis Lufkin** (NCSB-40), died October 31, 2005. After graduating from high school in Colville, Washington, she moved to Winthrop where she met and married Francis in 1937. Lola lived in Winthrop full time until 1972 and summered there at the house on Lufkin Lane until 2004.

Phil Syverson (Anchorage '71)

Phil died December 30, 2005. He was born in Great Falls and moved to Boise with his family when he was 16. Phil was a man of many talents: logger, welder, auto mechanic and artist. He learned to use sewing machines as a smokejumper and later used that skill to make tents.

Thad Duel (McCall '56)

Thad died of cancer December 28, 2005, at St. Luke's

Medical Center in Boise. He was raised in Oklahoma and got his bachelor's degrees in history and education while attending Oklahoma State on a football scholarship. Thad taught and coached football in Oklahoma, Kansas and Idaho. He was a school principal in Fairfield, Idaho and Beaver, Oklahoma, and worked summers as a smokejumper at McCall where he put in 31 seasons. Thad logged over 120 days a season skiing and could be found playing tennis or hiking during the other months.

Dean Sommers (Missoula '45)

Dean died at the age of 79 at his home in Canton, Ohio, on Sept. 8, 2005. He was the youngest of ten children; only two survive him. His father died when he was ten, so Dean had to quit school early to support his mother. He was a hard-working butcher all his life. During the war years he worked in mental hospitals and was a CPS-103 smokejumper at Missoula during the 1945 fire season.

James F. Gabiola (McCall '54)

Jim died January 12, 2005, of cancer. After graduating from Boise High School in 1950, he served three years as a sonar man in the Navy. Upon his return from the service, he attended Idaho State University and jumped at McCall from 1954-1957. Jim graduated from the Creighton University School of Dentistry in 1961 and moved to Bisbee, Arizona, where he set up his practice. He returned to Boise in 1969 and established the Northview Dental Center, retiring in 2002.

Chris Gunter (Redding '01)

Chris died on December 13, 2005. A native from Twin Falls, Idaho, he had a love for the outdoors and was an avid fisherman, and hunter. He was a star at whatever he did. A college football player, comedian, weightlifter, and smokejumper. Chris began his firefighting career in Idaho, followed shortly by a number of years on the Smokey Bear Hotshots, in New Mexico. Chris soon became a smokejumper, a job for which he had much pride. In 2003 he became a rookie trainer, a job fit for Chris. He was an amazing person with a huge appetite for life and deep-fat-fried foods. Chris always had an impression or a joke for us; his sense of humor is unmatched. The Redding locker room will be a lonely place this spring. Chris was a fine man, with a great heart. Good Luck God, you've got your hands full. (Courtesy NSA Web Site)

Albert Gray (Cave Junction '45)

Professor emeritus Gray died August 5, 2005 in Berea, Ohio. Albert was a CPS-103 jumper during WWII and was active throughout his life in civil rights, nonviolence and poverty problems in the U.S. and Third World. He was a professor of economics at Baldwin-Wallace University for 27 years and also taught at Drexel, Smith College and Rust College. Albert graduated from Drexel University, received his master's from Boston University and a doctorate from the University of Pennsylvania. In an earlier issue of *Smokeyjumper* magazine, Albert told of the time in August 1945, when he explained what an Atomic Bomb was to the crew at Cave Junction. 🔦



Spotter Mark Gibbons (closest to the door) and Assistant Spotter Kevin Pellman prepare to drop cargo on fire August 23, 2003. (Courtesy Mark Corbet)