

SMOKEJUMPER



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SMOKEJUMPER, ISSUE NO. 83, JANUARY 2014
ISSN 1532-6160

Smokejumper is published quarterly by:

THE NATIONAL SMOKEJUMPER ASSOCIATION
C/O 10 JUDY LANE
CHICO, CA 95926

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

NSA Web site: <http://www.smokejumpers.com>

Managing Editor: *Chuck Sheley*

Associate Editor: *Ed Booth*

Editing: *K. G. Sheley*

Photo Editor: *Johnny Kirkley*

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

Printing: *Larry S. Jackson*, Heidelberg Graphics,
www.HeidelbergGraphics.com

Cover photos: *Randy "Doc" Gore*, *Rich Tomich*,
and *Jerry Ogawa* as *Neds* in 1967. (Courtesy *R. Tomich*)

Randy "Doc" Gore, *Rich Tomich*, and *Jerry Ogawa* at *McCall Base Reunion*. 46 years later. *Gore* is retired after practicing internal medicine and cardiovascular research for 35 years; *Tomich* is a retired USAF fighter pilot (Lt. Col) and retired Southwest Airlines Capt. of 22 years; *Ogawa* is a retired teacher with 30 years in the classroom and a retired USFS smokejumper. (Courtesy *Jerry Ogawa*)



Message from the President



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

PRESIDENT

IT HAS BEEN a tough and tragic fire season for smokejumpers of the Bureau of Land Management and the U.S. Forest Service. In addition to the occasional time-loss injuries, both the BLM and the USFS have experienced jumper fatalities.

Luke Sheehy (RDD-09) lost his life when hit by part of a falling tree while on a fire in the Warner Wilderness in June. **Mark Urban** (NIFC-03), a Boise BLM jumper, died in September when his parachute failed to open in time during a training jump near Prairie, Idaho. In both situations the NSA was able to be there to provide assistance at the memorial services.

While words of comfort can be helpful, the pain of such losses needs more than words. For this reason the NSA has the Good Samaritan Fund to help in times of crisis and a scholarship program for children of jumpers killed in the line of service.

At the time of writing this article, there has been some snow and rain in the northern Rockies to help dampen at least some of

what has been a long and grueling fire season that relied on a considerable amount of booster activity from base to base.

In my October 2013 column, I suggested that one way you can leave a legacy to your smokejumping days would be to establish a scholarship. Since that time, two such scholarships have been established and will be available for the first time this coming year.

Kristin Maypole has established the **Dr. Donald E. Maypole** (IDC-54) NSA Scholarship to honor her father. More recently **Robert V. Potter** (MSO-51) has established an NSA scholarship. These two designated gifts, together with the current scholarships the NSA provides, will allow the funding of five scholarships that will help advance the learning and leadership skills of the recipients.

Read more about the scholarships, their criteria and the application process at the NSA website at www.smokejumpers.com. To discuss establishing scholarships, contact me at jimcherry@wctatel.net or call (641) 927-4428.

Charles Palmer (MSO-95), an associate professor at the University of Montana, has been researching a fire that happened outside of Choteau, Mont., in 1931 in which five men were overcome by the fire and died. Two of the firefighters who died are lying in unmarked graves in the Choteau Cemetery and it has been Charles' goal to get headstones in place for them.

While not meeting the criteria for funding from the Good Samaritan Fund, members from

the NSA's Board of Directors personally chipped in to support this project so those headstones could be in place before winter.

The NSA, now at 290 life memberships, is within striking distance of reaching 300 life members.

If you've been thinking about becoming a life member through a donation of \$1,000 to the NSA, why not put those good intentions into action before the end of the year and take advantage of the tax deductibility available through the NSA's 501(c)(3) status? Your gift becomes part of a fund where the principal is preserved and only the earnings of the fund are used to support annual operating expenses of the NSA.

You can find information about life memberships at www.smokejumpers.com and you can easily accom-

plish this level of membership online with the use of a credit card.

In making reference to the NSA's website, have you visited it recently? It has been redesigned this past summer and has a totally new look and feel. Comments have been very positive.

The photo gallery that changes every 10 seconds is made possible thanks to **Mike McMillan's** (FBX-96) excellent camera work. You can find more of Mike's photos and videos by visiting spotfireimages.com.

I hope you have marked your calendar for the All-Base Smokejumper Reunion scheduled for July 17-19, 2015. It will be held in Missoula and **Jim Phillips** (MSO-67) is heading up a top-notch, high-energy team that is laying out plans for this event that will be a celebration of the 75th anniversary of the first fire jump made in 1940. As the date draws nearer we will be keeping you informed of the reunion details.

Our next NSA Board of Directors meeting is scheduled for Boise March 19-20, 2014. Guests are always welcome. Just let us know in advance so we have sufficient seating available.

Finally, have you considered switching the method used for getting your issue of the *Smokejumper* Magazine? It is now available for delivery online. You can print off your own hard copy and also have it electronically available for future reference, plus you will get the electronic version 3-4 weeks earlier than you would through the regular mail system.

Past issues of the magazine going back as far as August 1993 are also available on the website. To switch to the electronic version, contact **Chuck Sheley** (CJ-59) at cnkgshaley@earthlink.net. 📧

Are You Going to Be "Temporarily Away"?

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

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

Another option is join our electronic mailing list. 📧

NSA Members—Save This Information

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

Smokejumper magazine

Articles, obits, change of address

Chuck Sheley
530-893-0436
cnkgshaley@earthlink.net
10 Judy Ln.
Chico, CA 95926

Membership

John McDaniel
785-668-2093
jumpercj57@hotmail.com
P.O. Box 105
Falun, KS 67442-0105

All else

NSA President
Jim Cherry
641-927-4428
jimcherry@wctatel.net
2335 300th St.
Ventura, IA 50482-8502

Smokejumper base abbreviations:

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

My First “Real” Combat Mission

by Gary M. Watts (McCall '64)

“**T**he Endless Cruise” actually began on April 5, 1972. We – the ship, USS Midway, and the air wing, CAG 5 – were scheduled to begin our training in preparation for our upcoming WESTPAC cruise, which was scheduled for June.

I flew aboard that afternoon in my VF-161, call sign “Rock River,” F-4B Phantom II, expecting to get some refresher night carrier landings later that evening. Night carrier landings, especially in high performance, high wing-loaded fighters like the F-4, are probably the most challenging and dangerous undertaking in all phases of aviation; it has been documented that a pilot’s heart rate is higher during a night carrier approach than during actual combat.

After landing and debriefing with the landing signal officer, my back-seater Lt. Jerry Hull and I headed down to the dirty-shirt wardroom, affectionately known as “gator chow,” for a couple of sliders and hopefully an auto-dog ice cream cone or two.

Jerry and I were attempting to choke down a couple of greasy Midway burgers when the ship’s captain came up on the ship’s PA system. He announced that there was absolutely no truth to the rumor that was spreading through the ship like wildfire, that due to the recent escalation in fighting in Vietnam we were leaving on cruise two months early and were on our way to the Western Pacific. No truth whatsoever.

Jerry and I looked at each other, then broke out laughing; how could a rumor like that get started? And why would the captain of the ship feel the need to deny the rumor?

Oh, well.

We made our way up to the Ready Room to hang out for a while, hoping to watch air ops on the closed-circuit TV or a movie, if one was available. There were, however, no air operations going on; all aircraft scheduled to come aboard were already aboard, and there was no movie either, because we were scheduled to night qual as soon as it got dark outside.

We were all too pumped up to catch a nap. Besides, since we weren’t planning on spending the night aboard and we hadn’t yet begun to move our stuff aboard, our staterooms were in pretty bad shape and almost bare.

As we were sitting around the Ready Room telling lies and generally trying not to think about the up-

coming and dreaded night carrier landings, the ship’s captain came up on the PA again:

“This is the captain speaking. I have an update on the rumor I mentioned to you earlier.”

A hush came over the Ready Room, and we all stared in rapt attention at the speaker mounted on the bulkhead.

“We have,” the captain continued, “been ordered to begin our cruise early. In fact, we are sailing straight for NAS Alameda right now, as I speak. We will sail for WESTPAC on Monday morning, three days from now.”

I could almost feel the air being sucked out of the Ready Room.

My head was spinning with all the things I needed to do in the next three days.

“Well,” someone said, “no night ops tonight.”

Amen!

The next three days were a whirlwind of activity getting ready to go on cruise: cruise boxes had to be packed up and taken to the squadron hangar area for transport to NAS Alameda; wills had to be drawn up and notarized; allotments had to be arranged; and most importantly, but most difficult of all, we all had to say farewell to loved ones.

Our remaining squadron aircraft were flown from NAS Miramar to NAS Alameda Sunday morning to be craned aboard the Midway. All remaining squadron personnel were flown from Miramar to Alameda Sunday evening.

Upon arrival we – the officers of Fighter Squadron 161, also known as the “Rocks” – carried our personal stuff aboard Midway (our cruise boxes had been loaded into the hangar bay and would be distributed during the TRANSPAC), then prepared for our last night in CONUS.

We mustered in the Ready Room and organized a fighter sweep on Jack London Square in Oakland. It would be a long time before any of us would see the inside of a bar and we wanted to take advantage of it. It would be a *very* long time before we’d see the inside of a bar on American soil.

The next morning, Monday, I went up on the flight deck, with somewhat of a hangover, and watched as we sailed under the Golden Gate Bridge. We were on our way.

The crossing would take about three weeks as the

ship would be cruising at a fuel-efficient speed of 20 knots, rather than full speed ahead. The plan was to bypass Hawaii and head straight for NAS Cubi Point in the Philippines.

We soon settled into our “transit routine.” The first event of the day, usually beginning at about 1300, was an AOM (all officer’s meeting) where we’d start off with training: aircraft and ship recognition, aircraft systems, tactics, carrier procedures, etc. Next would usually be a lecture by the skipper, Cmdr. “Deacon” Connell, usually on some subject that, for whatever reason, he deemed appropriate – mostly JO (junior officer) indoctrination, from war stories to how to survive Olongapo.

Occasionally, after the movie, groups of JOs would get together in one of the staterooms or bunkrooms. We’d sit around on bunks and on the deck, sometimes with a little libation from someone’s “secret stash,” and discuss what was on our minds; mostly about one subject that is on the mind of every young man about to go to war. *Will I be brave? Or will I be a coward? Will I be a disgrace? Or will I be a hero?* Apprehension was high, but most of us decided we’d be heroes.

Will I be able to kill? Would we all return when this cruise ended?

On the morning of April 24, after three weeks in transit, the Midway was east of the Philippines and within flying distance of NAS Cubi Point.

The plan was for each squadron to fly four aircraft from the ship to Cubi. These planes would be used to fly refresher and training missions while we were in port. The planes would then be flown back aboard the carrier after it sailed for the South China Sea.

We had four days in port to get all the pilots re-carrier-qualified, get everyone to Jungle Survival School Training, and to get as much low-level, high-air-speed time, simulating combat, as possible.

When the fly-off crews were posted, I was lucky enough to be one of them.

The flight to Cubi was a four-plane, low-level, high-speed sightseeing panacea beyond anything I had ever experienced. I was in awe of the steamy jungle, waterfalls, steep canyons, and even an active volcano that we passed over, barely clearing the smoking caldera.

We announced our arrival in the Philippines with a 500-knot entry to a pitch-up break, landing on the single runway in perfect interval. We dropped off our drogue chutes at the end of the runway and pulled into our aircraft parking slots simultaneously, making sure we looked like the hottest fighter squadron on the hottest ship in the Navy.

I opened my canopy in sync with the others and

was immediately assaulted with a blast in the face of steam bath-like air. As I was trying to adjust to the radical climate change, a Cubi transient line sailor clambered up the side of the aircraft and handed me an ice-cold green bottle of San Miguel beer.

“Welcome to the Philippines, sir,” he said with a huge grin.

I thanked him by downing the beer in about three swallows. Best bottle of beer in my entire life.

Midway wouldn’t arrive until the next morning, so the senior squadron guys decreed that they would give us junior guys the complete Cubi “indoctrination tour.”

We JOs were able to check the “been there, done that, got the T-shirt” block. That’s all that needs to be said about Olongapo.

We crammed about two weeks worth of flying into four days. The effort from the maintenance personnel was herculean. We bounced at night for carrier proficiency and flew low-level routes during the day.

When we sailed out of Subic Bay April 24, we were as ready for combat as possible, given the constraints

We wanted to be up North, where the action was, where the MiGs were. We were fighter pilots; we were trained for air combat. That was our job.

of an early departure and a lengthy TRANSPAC. The only casualty was an RF-8 that returned from a low-level with about six feet of outer wing neatly sheared off, presumably from a logging cable strung across a narrow canyon. We never found out for sure.

On 30 April, we launched our first “combat” missions over South Vietnam, making the entire ship’s company and air wing personnel eligible for the \$30-per-month combat pay bonus for April. We had landed right in the middle of the Battle of An Loc, but to us, this wasn’t *real* combat. Oh, I know the troops on the ground were in real combat, were probably thrilled that we were dropping bombs on the North Vietnamese and Viet Cong they were engaged with, but for us, there was little risk except, perhaps, from some random small-arms fire.

We wanted to be up North, where the action was, where the MiGs were. We were fighter pilots; we were trained for air combat. *That* was our job.

On Dixie Station we were engaged in ground support: dropping bombs on targets provided by forward

air controllers or ground spotters. We were sharpening our skills around the boat, improving our bombing accuracy, giving our teamwork, communications and mutual support skills a lot of exercise.

And we were blooded; we knew that our bombs had to have killed people. We had, for better or worse, leaped that hurdle.

After flight ops on May 10, we were gathered in Ready Room Six, waiting to watch a movie when we got a briefing from our “spy,” (intelligence officer) Lt. (junior grade) Tom “Flipper” Terlizzi: he told us of the huge air battle over North Vietnam that day, where Lt. Randy “Duke” Cunningham and Lt. (j.g.) Willie Driscoll bagged three MiGs for a total of five, making them the first aces of the Vietnam War. A total of seven MiGs were shot down in that air battle, with the loss of one F-4; Cunningham and Driscoll were hit by a SAM but were able to make it feet wet before they were forced to punch out.

We were buoyed by the news but frustrated that we were still down south, doing the Air-to-Mud mission, while all the fighter action was up North.

On May 11, after flight ops were concluded, the ship’s captain announced over the PA that we had proven ourselves ready and were on our way to Yankee Station. The next day, May 12, we were en route and on May 13 we began Alpha Strikes on North Vietnam.

My first few days on Yankee Station were spent standing the duty one day and flying BARCAP missions; the purpose of these flights was fleet defense, protect the carrier. Normally, BARCAP duty was almost boring and not real combat, turning a lot of JP-5 into smoke and noise. Later in the cruise, however, on January 12, 1973, Rock River Lt. Vic Kovaleski and Lt. Jim Wise while on BARCAP intercepted a MiG-17 over the Gulf of Tonkin, that was presumably planning to attack one of the Navy ships, and shot it down, earning a Silver Star for each of the airmen. That turned out to be the last MiG shot down during the Vietnam War.

On May 17 it was finally my turn for a combat mission over North Vietnam; Jerry and I showed up at the 0500 briefing in the AIC, Air Intelligence Center. We had been assigned “Iron Hand Escort.”

“Iron Hand” was the code for SAM – surface-to-air missile – suppression, similar to the Air Force’s “Wild Weasel.” The A-7 would penetrate the SAM envelope, baiting the missile operator to fire at him. If the operator did fire, the Iron Hand would counter-punch with a Shrike – a real duel. As escort, we’d tag along and try to protect the A-7 Iron Hand from MiGs.

The brief covered everything pertinent to the Alpha Strike on Hai Duong: launch, air refueling, rendez-



F-4 painting by Gary Watts. (Courtesy G. Watts)

vous, en route procedures, and threat analysis (location of SAM and flack sites and the MiG threat).

We met up with the VA-93, “Ravens” A-7 pilot and went over the details of the mission: the A-7 “Corsair II” would carry two “Shrike” anti-radiation missiles. The Shrike was designed to acquire and lock on to the guidance radar signal being sent to the Soviet-made surface-to-air missile. The Shrike would then follow that signal back to the guidance radar antenna at the SAM site.

Basically, we were to stay out of his way while we protected him from any MiG threat. Our instruction to him, if we did encounter any MiGs, was to hightail it to the coast as fast as possible and let us engage the threat. Pretty good plan ... for him. For us, not so much ... we would be without mutual support, the basic factor of air combat. But this was my first “real” combat mission and I felt bulletproof. Truth be told, I felt I could take on a *squadron* of MiGs; to hell with mutual support!

After launch, Jerry and I joined with a tanker overhead the ship and topped off with about 2,500 pounds of fuel. Then we found the Iron Hand A-7 we were to escort in the big merry-go-round above the ship and joined up with him.

We tagged along, for a while, behind the main strike group of about 10 F-4s, 12 A-7s and six A-6 Intruders, then turned toward our coast-in point, which

was about 20 miles south of the strike group's coast-in point.

When I saw the coastline of North Vietnam for the first time, a shiver went up my spine, my skin began to crawl, and my heart began to pound. My senses went into high gear.

The Iron Hand A-7 driver pushed his throttle forward, and I went to military power (maximum thrust without the use of afterburner) and went to a high cover position as we accelerated to about 500 knots. As we crossed the beach, I felt like Frodo Baggins entering Mordor.

I heard the strike lead call "weapons hot," on strike frequency, telling the Alpha Strike pilots to ensure their master arm switch was in the "armed" position in preparation to dropping their bombs.

I checked my switches: master arm – on, Sidewinder – left outboard selected, gunsight reticle – 35 mils (boresight).

We did some wide S-turns as Iron Hand searched for SAM signals and Jerry in my back seat scanned the sky with our radar for MiGs.

Suddenly, "SAM Launch" warble erupted in my earphones! A second later a Shrike erupted from the A-7 in a billow of white smoke and arched upwards, heading north. I heard "lead's in" over the radio, as the strike lead announced he was rolling in on his bomb run, triggering the entire strike group to begin the attack.

I could see the city of Hai Duong to the north of us but couldn't make out the airplanes of the strike group. Then the airspace above the city began to twinkle like a million flash bulbs going off.

God! How can any of our planes make it through that wall of flack?

"We're dead," I said to Jerry on the intercom as I mentally calculated our odds of surviving the cruise.

A second Shrike zoomed from the "Raven" A-7 and headed for a SAM site near Hai Duong.

The "SAM launch" warble in my headphones suddenly stopped.

I looked closely at the airspace above Hai Duong, expecting to see multiple aircraft falling in flames.

Nothing. They all made it. We might survive after all!

Suddenly, the A-7 rolled inverted and began a split-S; his plan was to reverse directions rapidly, accelerate and lose a lot of altitude, then make a dash for the coast. I rolled inverted and began to follow him. As I pulled the nose through the vertical, going straight down, I went supersonic.

Poof! The cockpit exploded in a fog so thick I couldn't even see the instrument panel. Somewhere in the dusty, dark recesses of my near-panicked

brain, a recollection of this particular scenario popped out. This is where all the blindfold cockpit checks proved their worth; I found the cockpit pressurization dump handle with my left hand and gave it a quick jerk.

Poof! The thick vapor disappeared as fast as it had formed. I pulled out of the split-S at an altitude of 1,000 feet at 1.4 IMN (indicated mach number) with the beach in sight about two miles on the nose and the A-7 nowhere in sight; a quick radio call confirmed he was already feet wet.

As we rocketed over the shoreline, I realized we had escaped the Kingdom of Doom without a scratch. A rush of adrenaline hit me like it was coming out of a fire hose. The exhilaration was unbelievable; I had no prior experience with illegal substances to compare it with, but it must have been in the same ballpark.

All that was left to complete my first "real" combat mission was to safely land aboard the carrier in spite of the severe adrenaline overdose.

The next day, May 18, in the morning, I went on a MiG CAP with my roommate and flight lead Lt. "Black Bart" Bartholomay. The mission of MiG CAP was to protect the strike group from enemy fighters but with the freedom to roam the skies in search of the MiG threat.

We coasted in just south of Haiphong and headed for Kep, a North Vietnamese airfield north of Hanoi. I dodged two SAMs in the ingress, and then multiple SAM "alerts" on our warning systems, along with lowering clouds, forced us to descend right down to the deck. We finally egressed after being notified that our Alpha Strike had been canceled due to weather and the strike group had gone south to the secondary target.

That afternoon, Bart and his radar intercept officer, Lt. "Taco" Bell, teamed up with a different wingman, Lt. Pat Arwood, and his RIO, Lt. Oran Brown, and went to the same place on the same BARCAP mission that Bart and I had that morning. At Kep they ran into two MiG-19s and each of the Rocks shot one MiG down.

We had met the enemy. We had been in combat. None of us turned out to be a coward. Some Rocks died on that cruise. One was taken prisoner. We got more MiGs - five, in fact - and went on to win the Admiral Clifton Trophy for best fighter squadron in the Navy.

The "Endless Cruise" lasted for 11 months, and we spent 205 days on the line – in combat. The ship/air wing lost more than 40 KIA/MIA/POW and was awarded the Presidential Unit Citation.

It was a *really* long cruise. 🦉



NSA Trail Crew



NSA Trails 2013

by Bob McKean (Missoula '67)

FOR FIVE YEARS the NSA Trails Program has provided our members with fabulous opportunities to spend time reliving moments of their youth with old friends and new in-the-wild places we all love. It has also provided all with a great way to "give back." Our hats are off to **Jim Phillips** (MSO '67) and **Gary Weyermann** (MSO '63) for their dedicated, outstanding leadership of the operational and logistics aspects of the program these past years. Jim has accepted other duties in the NSA and has handed the reins to **Dick Hulla** (MSO '75). Gary is looking forward to another phase of retirement and handed the logistics reins to **Jeff Kindermann** (MSO '75). Other members of the Trails Team are also looking forward to moving toward

another phase of their lives and future replacements will be in the offering.

The NSA Trails 2013 season was robust in the number of projects and individuals involved, not to mention all the silk stories shared around campfires! A total of 22 projects were conducted in nine states: nineteen (19) of the projects were in National Forests and three were in National Parks. Volunteers contributed over two hundred person-weeks of their time (80% smokejumpers and 20% associates). New this year was the MSO '69 Rookie Year Crew led by **Dave Dayton** (MSO '69); its project was at Black Bear in the Bob Marshall. Projects in the Rocky Mountain, Yellowstone, and Gateway National Parks were also new. And, New York was added to the list of those where projects have previously been done. Additionally, because NSA Trails has run in the black for several years, it was able to donate \$10,000 to the Jukkala-



Bridger-Teton NF - Huckleberry LO Project. L-R: Doug Wamsley (MSO-65), Jack Sterling (MSO-66); J.P. Schubert (FS Archeologist), Don Whyde, (MSO-66), Jim Schofield (MSO-66), Bill Hesketh (Assoc), Jamie Schoen (FS Archeologist) Fred Cooper (NCSB-62)

McBride Scholarship Fund and \$6,000 to the NSA Good Samaritan Fund.

Have some fun and take a look at the NSA Trails web site. In addition to lots of information about the NSA Trails program, videos and slide shows of 2013 projects may be found at. <http://nsatrails.com/>

We encourage all who may be interested to consider joining us for the 2014 season. Thus far twenty (20) projects are already in the mix for 2014 with

more anticipated. These projects include a good balance of diversity of locations and work representing volunteer interest. Specific information about the projects will be provided in the months ahead. It is possible that registration for 2014 projects will be done on line. Work is currently being conducted to this end. You will find more information about the 2014 projects as it evolves on the National Smokejumper Association website. 🔔

Finding The Lost Inuit

by Major L. Boddicker (Missoula '63)

Since my short smokejumper career in the 1960s, I have worked and traveled in many primitive places with the native folks. I worked in South Africa during and after apartheid – in Zululand, the Orange Free State, Transvaal, Cape Province in the big and small Karoo deserts, and Namaqualand. Some places were very dangerous.

I spent several months in the Reserve for Nomadic Tribes in the Urubamba Basin in Peru, where the Indians had never used baling wire or pliers. They regularly whacked each other to death with machetes. My favorite Indian guide, Federico, was hacked to death in a tribal drunken brawl nine months after I worked with him.

Siberia in 1991-92, and the African nation of Gabon in 2001-03 were – and still are – dangerous places, particularly for Americans.

My smokejumper training and experience with Inuit and Native Americans on fires helped me a great deal as I worked with the indigenous folks during my later adventures.

Boiled down, to get along with indigenous folk, reward them with small gifts, make them look and feel like you need them, and portray confidence that you are the toughest son-of-a-bitch in the valley. That gets you through it.

Alaska, July 1969: The King Creek Fire was winding down; it was mop-up time. A crew of Inuit (we called them Eskimos in 1969) from Kotzebue was brought in to handle part of the mopup effort. As they disembarked from the bus, I sauntered over to greet them.

Never having worked around Inuits before, I was curious as to how they would act. Like most Native Americans, most of them avoided eye contact and chatted among themselves as they waited around for

what was to come next.

One of the Inuits greeted me with a big grin and walked toward me. I walked up to him with my hand out. He had a nice, firm, confident grip to his handshake.

“Welcome to King’s Creek Fire,” I said.

“Looks like a good place,” he said. “We are from Kotzebue.”

“Are you coming here from another fire?” I asked.

“Yes. We’ve been on one for 11 days,” he replied.

“You must be tired and ready to relax,” I said. “This fire is pretty well out so it’s a good place to rest.”

“That would be good. Is the food good?” he asked.

“Yeah, it’s great – C-rations. Do you like the B-1 or B-3 units?” I grinned as I replied.

“Oh, we are tired of them. Our guts are not working good. We need muktuk,” he commented seriously.

Muktuk, as those of you with time spent in Alaska might remember, is fermented seal or whale skin and fat – not exactly something you buy at Safeway or get in government rations.

“Well, let’s check with the supply officer and see if we can order muktuk,” I answered. “Come with me so you can give him some details as to where to get muktuk.”

The Inuit was about 5-foot-6 and slightly built, tough, and wiry. He offered that he was a village policeman at Kotzebue and second in charge of the crew. His name I cannot remember, but it was something like Richard Dick.

Lots of Inuits have American names and Inuit names. For the government forms, they are named Jimmy Jim and Tommy Tom, etc., because the average American bureaucrat couldn’t begin to spell the Inuit name.

The supply guy was a jovial Park Service gent from



Bob Hooper awaiting a fire call at Fort Wainwright. Bob and Boddicker were on several fires during the 1969 fire season at Fairbanks and became great friends. (Courtesy M. Boddicker)

the lower 48 and was amused at the Inuit's request.

"I've got Imodium and Milk of Magnesia to cure the problem," he offered.

"This man is serious about ordering muktuk for his men," I replied. "They need the stuff for their guts to work right. Give it a try; it is done occasionally here," I added.

Richard seemed happy that I had given him some attention. We chatted as we walked back to his crew. My experience with Native Americans is their conversations are short and to the point with strangers.

The cop was good at visiting. We exchanged small talk about his family and life at Kotzebue. He asked several questions about my life. We talked for maybe 30 minutes before the Inuit crew was briefed as to where they were going and what they would be doing. Briefly, their assignment was to mop up the west side of the fire on top of the ridge.

They collected their gear and tools. A Fairbanks jumper was assigned to the group. The jumper, **Bob Hooper** (CJ-67), is a great guy, but was not very forest savvy at the time. The Inuit crew was to mop up until midnight, then hike back to the main camp for R&R.

I had been out at a line camp for six days on the southwest corner of the fire. Then I'd been choppered back to the main camp to be mustered out and hauled back to Fairbanks early the next day. The fire had been a real stuff-up from start to finish, which I have

described in recent articles.

The first fire boss was from the Park Service. He didn't like me or the other jumpers and was a particularly obnoxious, know-it-all, incompetent bureaucrat. Someone had realized he needed to exert his leadership somewhere else; he had been shipped out before I got back to base camp.

He wore Bermuda shorts around camp and set up a golf putting area to entertain himself as the fire burned up the taiga. He was a great justification for putting smokejumpers on each Alaskan fire so someone could see that the fire was put out and that everyone survived.

At midnight, when the Inuit crew was supposed to be back, they did not show up. At 3 a.m., they still were not back. Some of the overhead were concerned. I wasn't. Inuits don't get lost. They can travel in white-out blizzards on pure white sea ice during the Arctic nights and not get lost.

Someone asked me what I would do and I replied: "Nothing. When they get a little extra O.T. and get low on C-rations, they will discover their way back," I surmised.

By 9 a.m. the next day, still no sign of the Inuit crew. So, the overhead decided it was time to go find them. No aircraft was available. I was scheduled to travel back to Fairbanks that noon and was really looking forward to that.

The new overhead called a briefing. The Inuit crew had been gone over nine hours without contact; somebody needed to find them – this was an emergency! Who could do it?

Nobody replied. We jumpers knew it was a futile chore, and all of us were mega-thirsty for a Fairbanks beer.

"Somebody is going after them!" the overhead thundered. "Who knows this area the best?" he asked, looking at me.

"Not me. I'm a flatlander, a lower-48 type," I explained. My attitude was obvious.

"Well, you were the crew boss for that sector of the fire – you should know it best. You are going. Get your gear and get the f--- after them," he commanded.

"Ten-four," I replied.

"Need any further instructions?" he asked firmly, a sort of snide challenge in his voice.

"No, just a radio that works and grub," as I grabbed my ditty bag and loaded up on B-4 units, peaches and pound cake.

Come on – Inuits don't get lost, my mind confirmed.

The fire ran west and slightly to the north; most of it was on the south slope of King Mountain, from the creek to the top of the ridge. The fire was probably three miles from the creek to the top of the ridge and

six miles from the southwest corner to the Chicken-Eagle Road.

The Inuit crew had a radio. When I was working in that sector, I always had contact with base camp. So, why wasn't the Inuit crew checking in?

Could they have lost the radio? Maybe the batteries went dead, they dropped the radio in the creek, or they just shut the radio off so they couldn't be contacted so they could wash up and get some sleep and overtime. I didn't have a clue, but my concern level was at zero. These guys can take care of themselves.

Where to look for them? Absolutely only one place. They took only two meals of rations, so they would be getting hungry. The only way back to base camp was the easiest way, the trail along King Creek. So, I hitched up my ditty bag and headed west on the King Creek trail. It was a perfect July day: bright sun, cool breeze, and it had a long nap written all over it.

I puttered up the trail about two miles, then climbed up onto a huge boulder with another boulder stacked on top of it creating a great shady napping spot. The spot was next to, and overlooked, the King's Creek trail. I could see at least one-half mile west.

Out came a B-4 unit, and I had a nice Alaska fire lunch about 1 p.m. The nap urge got to me so I laid back against the boulder, tipped my black cowboy hat over my eyes and dozed off.

Now, the secret is out: A 1969 Alaska jumper took a nap at \$2.98 an hour on Forest Service time.

Faint voices woke me up about 2:30 p.m. Trudging down the trail, led by Bob Hooper, was the *lost* Inuit crew. I just laid there until Bob was directly below me.

"Hey, Bob! Sure am glad I found you. The overhead is really worried about you. He figured you were lost since you didn't show up at midnight."

Bob jumped, startled by my voice.

"Yeah, we got turned around and have been trying to figure out where we are. Where are we?" he asked.

"Man, I'm glad to see you!"

"King Creek, about two miles west of the road," I replied.

"That's a relief," he said.

"You been hiking all of this time?" I asked.

"Mostly," he replied.

"Is your radio not working?" I asked.

"Batteries must be dead," Bob replied.

"And the Inuit didn't know where you were?" I asked.

"No, they were as lost as I was," Bob replied.

"Well, take a break and relax; it's an easy hike out. I'll call in after our rest so the trucks can pick us up," I responded. No point in belaboring the obvious.

I climbed down from my perch and sat down beside the Inuit cop.

"How are you doing?" I asked.

"We had a good hike," he said.

"When was the last time you were lost?" I asked. My curiosity had gotten the best of me.

"Oh, this is the first time. We only get lost when the boss is lost," he said. "How did you know where to find us?" he asked.

"Same reason you have never been lost," I replied.

I radioed in about 4 p.m. that I had located the lost crew and we would be out to the road at King Creek about 5:15. They were relieved at the good news, and I was glad. It was *legendary hero moment* come easy for me.

Early the next morning, Bob Hooper, **Bill Meadows** (ANC-66) and I loaded into a station wagon for the long trip back to Fairbanks and several cool beers at Talon's. I was to see Richard Dick, the Inuit cop, again soon. 🍔

Former Jumper Joins Two Other Firefighters To Save Girl's Life

by Paul Peluso

(Copyright 2012, Firehouse.com)

A water rescue in Idaho Aug. 28, 2011, forced firefighters – one of whom is a former smoke-jumper and an NSA life member – to think outside the box in order to save the life of a 1-year-old girl.

Coeur d'Alene Capt. **Rich Halligan** (MYC-76), firefighter Blaine Porter, and engineer Matt Tosi from Engine 323 were dispatched to a call for a SUV that rolled off an embankment into a lake with reports of people trapped.

While the call was in an area covered by Kootenai County Fire and Rescue, the crew was requested for

mutual aid because of the proximity of their station to the location.

Since they knew they were going to a call for a vehicle in the water, they responded in their station uniforms and discussed what they would do when they got there.

Halligan told Tosi to get lines ready and handle coordinating rescue efforts on the shore. Porter told him he was a decent swimmer and since both of them were certified divers, they decided to go in after the possible victims.

They took off their boots, emptied their pockets of their radios and other items and jumped in.

There were already two police officers in the water surveying the scene.

The two firefighters swam about 20 to 25 feet out to the submerged vehicle.

"You could see the taillight and treading the water you could touch a part of it," Halligan said. "The shallowest part was about five feet down and the rest was deeper than that."

Due to poor visibility and depth, the two men couldn't stay down long enough to find a door after making several attempts. That's when Porter called out that the vehicle was moving down into deeper waters.

"The car settled or moved and we lost sight of it," Halligan said. "We could no longer feel it while treading water. We were pretty frustrated. We had no mask, snorkel or fins."

That's when Porter suggested they go back for their SCBA packs and use the masks to see better under the water.

While they were ashore, Porter thought, "Let's grab the whole thing."

He had some experience taking SCBAs into the water with the military while working with Virginia Task Force 2, but little did he know they were about to take that training a step further.

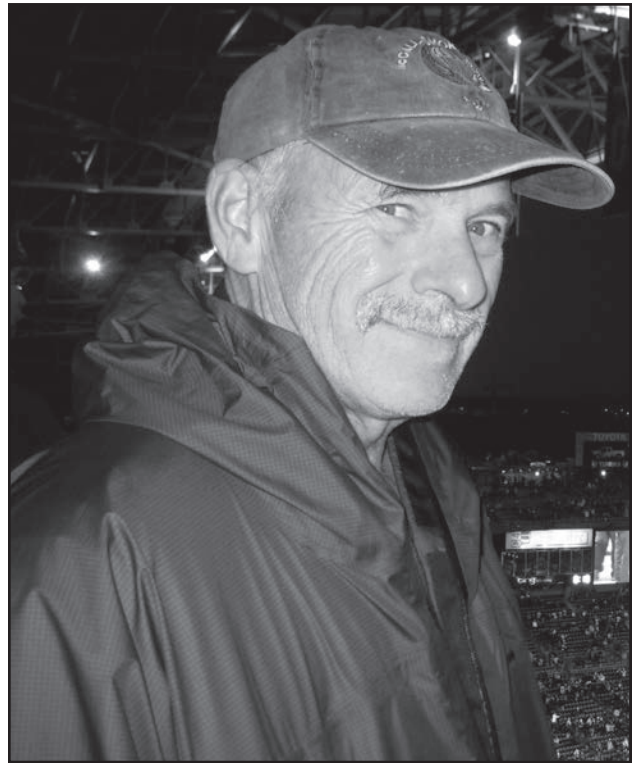
Halligan said that a few years prior, the department trained with the air pack in water in case they fell off a dock, but were never submerged with them.

The two men suited and went back out with taglines attached to them.

Porter spotted the car when they were about 10 to 20 feet apart from each other.

"I could see his rope going down under the water with a water stream coming up. I didn't know what to expect but it seemed to be functioning fine," Halligan said. "My first concern was that he wasn't in trouble."

Porter said that he didn't expect to have to go that far under with the mask on at first, but knew he had little time to make the rescue.



Rich Halligan (Courtesy Cherri Halligan)

"On the way down, I was just checking my breathing," he said. "Looking back on it, we didn't know if they were functioning correctly, but it was working well enough that I was able to have enough air where I could breathe down there."

Halligan went down under behind Porter in case he got in trouble.

Porter reached the front passenger window that was rolled down and was able to pry open the back door.

Porter was able to remove the boy; then Halligan grabbed him while he was still under the water and then went back in for the girl. He was able to manipulate the car seat she was in and pull her out.

As Porter and the girl surfaced, Halligan was coming back across the lake. They brought the girl to the shore where paramedics took her.

As they sat on the edge of the lake, Halligan looked at Porter and said, "Good job – good job."

"I've been in EMS for around 30 years, and this was the most time-critical rescue I've been involved in," he said.

They both sat on the edge of the lake to catch their breath before Halligan shed his gear to help with the resuscitation of the girl.

That girl, River Deshazer, survived the ordeal, but her 5-year-old brother, Evan, unfortunately did not.

Halligan said that as with every death that occurs during a response, it's not something that firefighters

should dwell on.

"You're happy you're able to save one," he said.

"You just do your best and save the ones that work out and have to deal with the ones that don't.

"It sure would have been nice to save them both, but it wasn't in the cards."

Both men credited their training and planning with being able to successfully rescue the girl.

"Have a plan in case things go bad," Halligan said.

"When we went back out we had the taglines. My big

concern was that the SCBA is an entirely different setup to SCUBA. If you fill the mask with water you could drown.

"The first thing I thought is what do we do if we flood the mask? As the whole thing was evolving, I was thinking: 'How do I get Blaine out of trouble if he gets in trouble?'"

Both men were quick to point out that despite all of the recognition they have received for the rescue, it was a team effort. 🧑‍🚒

Book Reviews

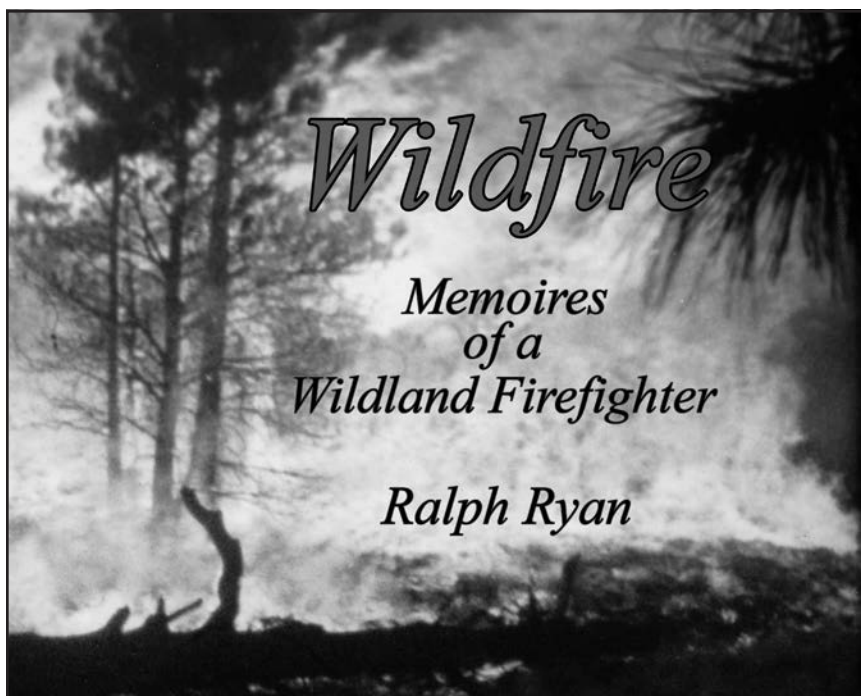
WILDFIRE: MEMORIES OF A WILDLAND FIREFIGHTER

by Murry A. Taylor
(Redding '65)

When **Ralph Ryan** (RDD-77) first mentioned that he was writing a book on smokejumping, I responded like I normally do – with skepticism. A lot of people have said that to me in the past, but mostly they're just thinking about it.

We were at Redding's end-of-season party last fall. I'd already had more than my share of Irish whiskey and was feeling more like enjoying the Redding crew's high spirits, telling jump stories and carrying on, than talking about writing. But the more Ralph talked, the more I became impressed – not just with him, but with what he was saying about smokejumping and how he said it. I agreed to look over his manuscript and possibly write a review when it was finished.

In early May 2013, I read *Wildfire: Memories of a Wildland Firefighter* for the first time. Ralph and I are now friends so I can be totally honest here. The book was strong in very important ways, but had a few problems here and there with sentence



structure, word usage, lack of clarity, date errors, etc.

During the Redding Rookie 2013 Campout in mid-May, Ralph and I sat on a couple stumps for a couple of hours, drank a couple beers, and went through the entire manuscript discussing these issues. True to the strength of his character and his appreciation of good writing, Ralph was open to editorial oversight. He went through it a

few more times, polishing and tightening, until he had completed a fine book.

Ralph's book is a story of stories about the trajectory of a man's life drawn to the passion and heart of smokejumping. From his first years as a helitack crewman, his love of fighting wildfire is clear. On the Flat Fire in Southern California, he meets his first smokejumper, a scruffy-looking, happy-go-lucky guy

they call “Pig Pen.”

Pig Pen has a sparkle in his eyes as he tells Ralph, “Whatever you’ve heard about smokejumping – you’d better believe it. I’m never going back to the f---ing district.”

Star-struck, Ralph can think of nothing else but jumping out of airplanes to fight forest fires. Thus begins the odyssey of Ralph’s 10 years as a smoke-jumper.

As a Redding pogue in 1977, you meet such characters as Hurricane Tracy, Gramps, Boy, Vice, Fast Eddie. As the stories and years progress, there’s Hairhat, Mr. Atlas, Perky, Disco Duck, Max, Squirrely Early, Big D, Barf Bag Bailey, Buffalo, Cave Man, the Kroger brothers and more.

This book is an up-close-and-

personal look at smokejumping from the inside as it is felt and lived by the jumpers themselves. You will boost other bases such as McCall, go to the Forester’s Tavern, Lardos, and Si Buenos. You will jump fires in Alaska, standby in Galena and Bettles. You will jump fires out of the Redmond, Missoula and North Cascades smokejumper bases.

You will be on the very last fire jump ever made out of the Cave Junction base – the Gobi and hear of Mouse and other Gobi jumpers. Near the end of the book, Ralph transfers to Alaska and learns to jump squares in both the north country and the Great Basin as a Bureau of Land Management jumper.

I started out as a Redding jumper, and so I know most all

of the people in that part of the story. At various times I jumped at all the other bases as well, and thus have a strong affection for them as well. As smokejumpers we were blessed to be part of something great and special. We lived it and we know that.

Ralph’s book took me back to important times and people. I’m sure that *Wildfire: Memories of a Wildland Firefighter* will do the same for you. I highly recommend it. 🔦

Editor’s note: Murry Taylor is the author of *Jumping Fire*, another outstanding book about smokejumping.

This book should be added to your smokejumper library and is available through NSA merchandise.

HOG’S EXIT - JERRY DANIELS, THE HMONG AND THE CIA

by Carl Gidlund
(Missoula ’58)

I knew **Jerry Daniels** (MSO-58), but nowhere nearly as well as the 83 persons, including smokejumpers, Central Intelligence Agency and State Department personnel, refugee volunteers, Montana friends, Hmongs and Thais who the author interviewed for this 419-page book.

Jerry and I trained together as smokejumpers and served on the same New Mexico crew in 1960. We also were fellow parachute riggers. However, a review of my jump records reveals that we never fought fire together. And we went our separate ways in 1961, Jerry to work for the CIA, me to the military.

So, I can confirm a couple of author Gayle Morrison’s findings

about Jerry’s early days. It was an open secret that he was 17 when he started jumping, as the author reveals. And he was a very hard worker, but a serious drinker even then, as were many of us young tigers.

According to the book, those were two traits that this talented, handsome, fascinating, and multi-faceted man retained through his 41 years. He was a prodigious worker who abstained from alcohol when he was on the job; when he wasn’t, he often drank himself into oblivion.

He enrolled in the University of Montana in 1960 and studied at that school during periodic leaves from his adventurous life overseas.

Following his recruitment by the CIA, Jerry was dispatched to Laos as a “cargo kicker,” rigging

parachutes and dropping rice, ammunition and other supplies to Laotian mountain people called Hmongs who, under Gen. Vang Pao, were fighting the communist Pathet Lao and North Vietnamese attempting to take over the nation.

He returned to the states the following year and signed up with Intermountain Aviation in Marana, Ariz., a CIA proprietary. There, he helped develop aerial delivery systems and participated in the recovery – by the Fulton Skyhook System – of a pair of military intelligence officers who’d been parachuted onto an ice island abandoned by the Soviets in the Arctic Ocean.

His work for Intermountain continued intermittently during the next few years, whenever he returned to the states.



Vang Pao Statue in City Plaza Chico CA (Courtesy Ed Booth)

By 1965, he had moved up the ranks in the CIA and up-country in Laos where he was one of the managers of air operations at Na Khang for three years, enduring enemy attacks. He returned again to the states in April 1968 and graduated from the University of Montana the following year.

Following that, he attended the CIA's junior officer course in Virginia, then returned to Laos as case officer and chief of

operations at Long Cheng. In the course of that work he became the chief adviser to Gen. Vang Pao and his guerrilla army and picked up the nickname "Hog."

A coalition government was formed in Laos in 1974. It failed, and the following year communist forces took over the country. Jerry organized the evacuation of the general and 2,500 of his troops to refugee camps in neighboring Thailand. (*Morrison's first book was about this air evacuation in May 1975. That book is dedicated to Jerry and is titled "Sky Is Falling: An Oral History of the CIA's Evacuation of the Hmong in Laos. Ed.)*

Attached to the State Department now, he labored for the next seven years as that agency's chief ethnic affairs officer for the Laotians stranded there. As part of that job he vetted the refugees who claimed they had participated in the struggle against the enemy. He was instrumental in sending many of those who had been loyal to his general to the U.S., including a large number whom he helped settle in Missoula.

Jerry's badly decomposed, unrecognizable body was found in his Bangkok apartment May 1, 1982. The Thai police officials who investigated reported that he died in his bed three days earlier, victim of a malfunctioning propane water heater. A young Thai man was unconscious in another bedroom in the apartment but, after he was resuscitated, he fled and has never been found.

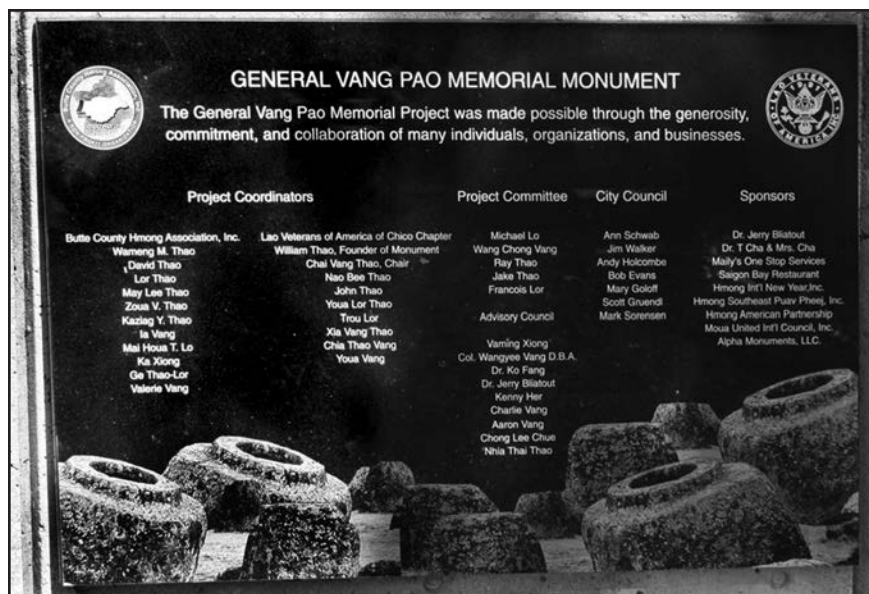
The body was shipped to Missoula in a tightly sealed coffin with strict orders from the State Department that it was not to be opened. That instruction was suspicious to the majority of Jerry's Laotian friends and many American pals as well.

Some claimed that Jerry's body was not in the casket, that he was actually on a secret mission somewhere. Others suspected that he'd been murdered or perhaps committed suicide. Nevertheless, the coffin wasn't opened. A pair of U.S. government agents kept vigil in the funeral home to ensure that the government's orders were obeyed until the coffin was lowered into a vault in a Missoula cemetery.

He was loved by the Hmongs with whom he worked, and they honored Jerry with a multi-day traditional Hmong sendoff at the funeral home, cemetery and a Montana lake he loved.

The author of Hog's Exit is obviously an expert on the Hmong culture. The book's jacket notes that, since 1977, she has been involved with that community in education, refugee services, private enterprise and as a historian. Thus, she described in great detail their funeral ritual that, the Hmong believe, liberated Jerry from this earth.

"Hog's" hard work in Laos and Thailand was recognized by both the CIA and the State



Inscription on Vang Pao Statue in City Plaza Chico CA (Courtesy Ed Booth)

Department. The former agency awarded him three medals, for distinguished service, for merit and for valor. Then-Secretary of State Henry Kissinger signed a letter of commendation in 1976; four years later, he received State's Superior Honor Award.

The book details Jerry's many escapades, both overseas and in his beloved Montana. Author Morrison learned of only one serious woman friend, a lady he called "the maid" in Missoula. But he was very fond of women, and he devoted a lot of attention to prostitutes abroad and state-side.

And, as noted earlier in this review, he was a prodigious drinker when off the job. In Montana, he and his pals would get their kicks on toots they called "D and D" – "drinkin' and drivin.' "

He was also a prodigious sportsman, hunting, fishing, hiking, camping and boating – often while intoxicated – during his trips home.

The book's structure is not

linear; Morrison leaps forward in her narrative, then drops back. It consists principally of interviews with the friends and colleagues with whom Jerry associated over the years. It also contains excerpts of letters and audiotapes he sent and received, including to and from his beloved mother, Louise, with whom he was on a first-name basis.

The book is lavishly illustrated with 101 photographs, taken both in the states and abroad. It also contains five maps and an index, which is helpful in tracing Jerry's many perambulations.

Every excerpt from an interview, even if it's only a paragraph, is preceded by a short explanation of the source. For example, here's one: "Randolph 'Toby' Scott, former smoke-jumper, former Continental Air Services (CASI) loadmaster, Laos." That explanation is repeated for each entry, even if the interviewee is quoted later on the same page. That could have been a distraction, but with 83 interviewees, it seemed necessary

to keep track of who's who.

Morrison's sources include 16 smokejumpers, some of whom worked with Jerry overseas; others who didn't but were friends in the states. Those are Jack Benton (MSO-59), **LaMonte "Chris" Christensen** (IDC-55), brother **Jack Tupper Daniels** (MSO-54), **Jon Foland** (MSO-68), **Lee Gossett** (RDD-57), **Glenn F. Hale** (MYC-57), **Ken Hessel** (MYC-58), **Thomas C. "Shep" Johnson** (MYC-56), **Larry Nelsen** (MSO-56), **Robert H. Nicol** (MSO-52), **Mike Oehlerich** (MSO-60), **Barry Reed** (MSO-60), **Randolph "Toby" Scott** (MYC-57), **Thomas "T.J." Thompson** (MSO-55), **Bob Whaley** (MSO-56), and **Keith "Skid" Wolferman** (MSO-91).

Others cited for their help in compiling the book, but not interviewed, include **Tim Eldridge** (MSO-82), **Chuck Sheley** (CJ-59), **Bill Fogarty** (MSO-57), **Chris Sorensen** (Associate), **Fred Donner** (MSO-59), **Robert Beckley** (RAC-83), and **Robert Hubble** (MSO-91). 🔪

Hosts Needed At Siskiyou Smokejumper Museum

Smokejumpers and friends have done a terrific job of restoring the historic buildings at the Siskiyou Smokejumper Base in Cave Junction, Oregon. Although it is still a work in progress, the museum has to be the best smokejumper museum in existence.

That said, we need your help. The museum is open from March 15 to November 15 and located on the busy Redwoods Highway leading from the coast to I-5. Hosts to help us keep the doors open are needed.

We have an apartment with kitchen, bathroom, and bedroom at the back of the Visitor's Center. An RV hookup is also available.

Duties would include welcoming visitors and

guiding tours through the three buildings. As with campground hosts, we also need to keep the lawns mowed and the place clean.

Within driving distance, you could visit Crater Lake, Oregon Caves, Redwoods and the Oregon Coast. Coverage would be provided if you wanted to take time off to be a tourist.

You can host anywhere from a day to a week to a month. We will provide a tour outline with historical background. Although it helps to be a jumper, non-jumpers have done an excellent job of hosting.

Give us a hand in preserving smokejumper history. To get on the hosting calendar, contact: **Wes Brown** (CJ-66) at (541) 592-2250 or alphaa@frontiernet.net.



Touching All Bases



McCall Base Report

by Adam Dealaman (McCall '10)

ANOTHER ONE in the books, folks. This season, the McCall Smokejumper Base saw several special guests and at least one notable event that took place at the base.

As many of you already know, or at least assumed, the “Champagne of Bases” is a favored destination for many international wildfire heavy hitters. Most notably, we were delighted to host at least one leader of an Amazonian fire crew, whose home unit is several million acres of tropical rainforest.

The Moroccan fire director got lost on his way to NIFC and stopped by the base to take in a practice jump. Lastly, while not exactly a wildfire heavyweight, Sen. Michael Crapo (R-ID) came through to shake hands and kiss babies before heading back to D.C. to accomplish nothing.

Despite all our special visitors, the 70th Region 4 Smokejumper Reunion and a softball team that didn't even qualify for playoffs, the most significant bro event that occurred this summer, came with the opening of the Broken Horn Brewery, spitting distance from the base. Good or bad for the bros? I'll let you decide!

Despite a lull after the record-breaking first jump of the season May 7, the 2013 season proved to be another busy one for the McCall Smokejumpers. Several single-resource assignments came down the pipeline, but the majority of assignments were old-school initial attack, getting in the door and crackin' mountain canopies.

As soon as late June rolled around, McCall bros were tightening leg straps and hooking up static lines all over the Great Basin and beyond. It all started with a pre-position to Ogden, Utah. With “The Todds” – **Todd Franzen** (MYC-98) and **Todd Haynes** (MYC-02) – serving as LOs/pimps/spotters, the Ogden contingent was able to respond to multiple fires in Utah and Idaho.

Back in McCall, if you weren't lucky enough to



join the Utah contingent or get on the boost to Alaska, the break in monotony came with a diverted practice jump! That's right – the holy grail of all jump-arounds. The lucky bottom-of-the-listers, **Brent “Somebody Get This Man a Perm Already” Morrison** (MYC-10) and **Brandon “The Duke” Corbitt** (MYC-10) performed an airplane crash rescue-jump on the Dewey Moore backcountry airstrip.

The Boise and Salmon/Challis National Forests were the first forests to call in early July, resulting in several fires staffed and a booster ordered for McCall. One of those fires, Lime Creek, was staffed by none other than

Matt “Morning Briefs” Galyardt (MYC-02). This gave Matt a break from the ops box and a much-deserved ICT3 assignment.

Called up for single-resource duty, **Eric “Robocop” Messenger** (GAC-00), **Jon “General” Patton** (MYC-06), **J.T. “Big Flip” Belton** (MYC-04), **Brent “Fur Trader” Sawyer** (MYC-98), and **Ian “That Is Rich” Quist** (MSO-08) all took DIV or TFLD assignments in July.

True to his nature, HEQB “**Dirty**” **Kurt Ryan** (MYC-08) and his personal space-invading trainee **Adam “Huggy” Humbach** (MYC-09) could be found getting dirty and droppin' dozer blades in the Boise foothills on the Pine Creek Fire.

The rest of July and August saw sustained mountain canopy cracking with the base jumping out several times. Three separate boosts came through McCall – two from Redding and one from Redmond. Two booster orders went UTF. Even though we had boosters coming in, we were still able to do some boostin' ourselves.

Aside from two Redding boosts and an Alaska boost earlier in the season, the McCall bros also boosted the BLM-Boise satellite bases, North Cascades and Redmond. The RAC boost came with a very special guest. BM **Joe “I Hate Clowns” Brinkley** (MYC-98) made the RAC boost and capitalized on several good deal two-manners with his trusty jump partner **Colin “Lando” Lanigan** (MYC-10).

Fire season hit the skids for McCall in September.

Fire activity slowed considerably, leaving bros looking for a good time.

The Sneds threw another amazing T-party, taking the plunge and hosting it at Zim's Hot Springs. Despite concerns for exposure and mixing bros with alcohol and hot water, **James "The Bod" Norvell** (MYC-12) and **Casey "Boogie Nights" Czinski** (MYC-12) pulled off one hell of a fish boil and awards ceremony, with "Golden Toggles" going to our very own superhero, **Lane "LMFL" Lamoreaux** (MYC-09).

Last, but definitely not least, the biggest bash of the year came in early October with the wedding of **Ramona "Lee" Hull** (RAC-06) and **Jazz "Edward" Beyuka** (MYC-08). The ceremony and festivities took place at the beautiful Hettinger Ranch, along the south fork of the Salmon River. The dancing went all night, and music courtesy of DJ **Kyle "Kage" Esparza** (MYC-10) kept folks howlin' at the moon.

Despite all of the hard work and sacrifices that we make on behalf of the people and resources of this great nation, the McCall Smokejumper Base learned Oct. 1, 2013, that all staff would be furloughed along with 800,000 federal employees. Sure, some folks don't mind getting laid off early or taking a little mandatory vacation, but I think the vast majority of federal employees enjoy getting paychecks.

So when that large fire pops somewhere in the U.S., I sure hope Sen. Ted Cruz (Texas '13) knows how to swing a Pulaski. Have a great winter, but don't bother calling or stopping by because the McCall bros are on furlough and either in hunting camp or sipping Thai iced teas in Bangkok!

Redding Base Report

by **Mike Manion** (Redding '13)

SMOKEJUMPER OPERATIONS HAVE continued well into October and will continue into part of November at Redding. We got an order Oct. 13 to the Shasta Trinity, but did not put any jumpers on the fire due to the streamers showing 850 yards of drift – that is, until the helitack crew needed a C-Faller, and we obliged when they offered to pick up the fallers out on our ramp. Additionally, there are currently eight jumpers falling trees for the BAER team on the Rim Fire, Stanislaus National Forest.

New Base Manager **Josh Mathiesen** (RDD-94) has had his hands full since his recent appointment, yet has managed to jump a few fires along the way. He has a clear vision and good direction set for the California Smokejumpers program.

The regional office has filled two senior smoke-

jumpers positions with snookies **Roberto Cervantes** (RDD-12) and **Frankie Betancourt** (RDD-12). We will be losing a couple more big hitters in early 2013 as Loft Foreman **Tim Quigley** (RDD-79) and Assistant Loft Foreman **Dan Hernandez** (RDD-85) are approaching retirement. This will open many positions that we will strive to fill as quickly as possible.

Needless to say, things should start getting really exciting quickly (assuming our government reopens for business). In a meeting with Tom Harbour this July, it was stressed to us that the future of the smokejumper program will rely on our ability to quantify our success, and that the "two-manner in the 'Bob'" will be a thing of the past.

Despite all the hardships and tough losses incurred throughout this season, we were able to finish on some good notes and high points. A total of 353 jumpers got out of the door in California this year and staffed 73 fires. There were multiple epic jumper catches (significant saves) both in the North Zone and out of our South Zone base in Porterville, which has been staffed periodically since June and constantly since mid-August.

J-52 pilot Jesse Jenks was there almost the entire time and flew the majority of the missions. Many of our guys spent more than 50 days in South Zone.

Alaska jumper **Chris Lord** (FBX-08) was a treat to have around the Porterville base for a short period this year. It was unfortunate that he suffered a femur fracture on the Windy Fire, Tule River Indian Reservation. We can't help but admire his incredible strength and ability to push through some rugged pain as he recovered in an unfamiliar hospital thousands of miles from home. Thanks, bro!

Single-resource assignments were not skimpy this year, either. The Corral and Rim Fires together have hosted divisions, task force leaders, C/B-fallers, dozer bosses, fire use crewmembers, and air attack. A late-season boost came from the Alaska bros and a couple of them hung in there until the bitter end.

We also had boosters in from Boise, Redmond, North Cascades, McCall, and a mixed load of Missoula/Grangeville from Albuquerque this season. Redding boosted Alaska, Redmond, McCall, Grangeville and Pocatello.

Pilot John Blumm has left to fly missions for the Marine Reserve in the Middle East, primarily out of Qatar, trading the speed demon Sherpa for a more docile Citation jet.

The honorable Rookie of the Year award was clinched by notable candidate **Andrew "Goon" Gruenberg** (RDD-13). **Dave Johnson** (RDD-00) bagged the first tree of his career, after 275 jumps, and had to

perform a monster 15-foot letdown. **Felipe Marquez** (RDD-03) and **Curtis Matthews** (RDD-10) shared the coveted Jump Shark award with 14 fire jumps each.

Matt Smith (GAC-01) is on a long detail here in California, yet we are having a hard time keeping JPs around for him. **Dean Banducci** (RDD-03) wasn't able to jump this year as he had to fight through bureaucratic red tape to get a new Selective Service number issued and couldn't report in time for fire season. His cuddly personality was greatly missed.

Joey Maggio (RDD-09) and wife, Renee, welcomed daughter Sienna to the world this spring, with **Roberto Cervantes** (RDD-12) and his wife, Yolanda, honoring good friend **Luke Sheehy** (RDD-09) by naming their son Luke, born in July.

Cooler fall weather has set in, with the sun noticeably lower in the sky, the seasonals also noticeably listless as they can't stop discussing plans for traveling, skiing, surfing and just simply getting the hell out of here. They have obviously drawn the scorn of our proud year-round work force, which will charge forward annulling parachutes and scrubbing the floors.

This season saw a few injured jumpers placed on the inactive list for either the whole summer or a good majority of it. They worked tirelessly to keep our operation going, all the while watching their bros suit up and get out the door. We can't thank them enough and sympathize with their tough situation.

Luke Sheehy was honored at the California Fire Fighters Memorial at the State Capitol in Sacramento in early October, a ceremony well-attended by wildland and city firefighters alike. It's been a treat to receive frequent visits from the Sheehy family and keep in touch. It always feels good to be in their company, and it's a real good reason to barbecue. We love and miss our friend dearly.

Sad news has been a constant tone in the smoke-jumper community this year. Our hearts are with all the bros, and we are optimistic for the future.

Redmond Base Report

by **Dave Ortlund** (Redmond '10)

WELCOME BACK. WE are headed into the winter and it is time to take a look back at the 2013 fire season. As I write this, it's the beginning of October and the Redmond jumpers are hard at work falling hazard trees on the Rim Fire.

Craig Hingley (RAC-04) and 11 others are working for the BAER Team on the Rim, with the likes of Redding and North Cascades. Back at the base, ev-

eryone else is furloughed or not answering the phone. The T-Ball is a week away, and it has been meshed into **Matt Britt's** (RAC-08) wedding reception. Congrats Matt and Ali!

From the last update to now, the activity at RAC increased significantly. August was non-stop action with fire jumps in Oregon. Heavy lightning activity on the crest kept the base buzzing into September. The theme of the summer was good deal two-manners across nearly every forest in Oregon.

Highlight, Jump 78 swooped in on rappeller country staffing four fires in the Strawberry Wilderness. They reportedly saw canopies from the rappel base descending into the Strawberries.

A few noteworthy gobs were in the mix. Ten jumped the Vinegar Fire on the Umatilla as a Type 3 team, led by **Jason Barber** (RAC-05). A load jumped the Labrador Fire on the Rogue Siskiyou in its early stages. A group of gypsy jumpers boosted for the majority of the summer. **Dustin Underhill** (RAC-10) and **Shane Orser** (RDD-08) rambled across the West and received an extensive base tour, going from SVC-ABQ-FBX-MYC-SLC-Twin-Pocatello-RDD-WYS and home. They are most likely the overtime hogs this year.

Single-resource assignments were few and far between this season for most of us at RAC, probably due to Redmond's lower numbers this year. A handful of the bros filled a variety of positions on the Rim Fire. **Dave Ortlund** (RAC-10) and **Howard McGuire** (RAC-07) served as helicopter managers for Red Dragon Helitack, **Mike Leslie** (RAC-97) as division trainee and later member of Red Dragon Helitack, and **Josh Cantrell** (RAC-97) as North Rim Air Attack.

In other news regarding us Redmond folk: **Howard McGuire** (RAC-07) and **Ralph Sweeney** (RAC-01) are now officially signed off as spotters. We completely trust them until they bone us. **Brandon Coville** (RAC-00) accepted a job as AFMO on the Rogue Siskiyou in late September. Best of luck, Brandon! We will miss your awesome energy at the base! I am sure you will hook us up with a good case of poison oak in the future.

Brandon made his 100th fire jump this year into his favorite hunting grounds on the Willamette National Forest. What a good deal!

Garrett Allen (RAC-10) was extremely successful on his archery elk hunt. He put the stalk on and killed a massive bull elk in the Eagle Caps. **Craig Hingley** (RAC-04) took up stand-up paddle boarding (SUPing) in his spare time. **Geoff Shultz** (RDD-01) is the jump hog of the 2013 season with 14 fire jumps.

Congratulations to **Sean Wishart** (RAC-04), the proud father of a baby girl!

RAC is now the proud owner of a brand-new Traeger grill. There are high expectations for the future of barbecue Sundays. Please stop by in the summer and join us. **Marcel Potvin** (RAC-07) will undoubtedly be elected to the new position of BIC (barbecue-in-charge). There are high standards to be expected under this French Canadian dictatorship.

Future rookies have their work cut out for them at RAC. **Ray Rubio** (RAC-95) has his retirement plan in place. He says he will be either running an inmate crew for Cal Fire or he will be on the crew. Only time will tell ...

Many other important jump milestones and current events are undoubtedly missing from this report. There are certainly many good, slightly embellished stories to be told after this season. So, if you run into any RAC bros, I am sure they will be happy to tell you a few over a few. To all the bros out there, have an excellent winter! We look forward to sharing more with you soon. Happy furlough.

Alaska Base Report

by **Bill Cramer** (NIFC '90)

THE ALASKA BASE had another very active fire season in 2013 with boosters from every lower-48 base lending assistance. Overall, it was a pretty long and tough season with the losses of **Scott Wicklund** (NCSB-91), **Joe Philpott** (NIFC-09), **Luke Sheehy** (RDD-09) and **Mark Urban** (NIFC-03) keenly felt.

Fire season was preceded by one of the latest winters in our record books. Training jumps in April featured above-average snow levels with the added fun factor of abnormally cold temperatures.

More than a foot of snow remained on the ground May 10 with three inches of fresh powder covering the wings of our jumpships. The Tanana River Ice Classic nearly set the late break-up record when the ice finally went out on May 20, and green-up didn't hit Fairbanks until nearly the end of May. The Alaska fire season didn't look excessively promising at this juncture.

The Alaskan summer finally woke up from its winter hibernation as temps went from record cold to record hot in a matter of days. The resulting shift from frozen to liquid water spelled big trouble for our primary western spike base in Galena.

The Galena jump shack and BLM facilities survived the Yukon River ice dam flooding, but both Old Town and New Town Galena were very heavily damaged. Only limited smokejumper operations were able to occur in Galena with most prepositioned jumpers operating from either McGrath or Nome.

Fire activity and jumper utilization was high throughout the months of June, July and August with significant activity in most areas and zones. Of note was the Military Zone, experiencing an atypically high level of problematic fires that required significant resource commitments for extended periods of time.

The overall shortage of jumpers in the system was keenly felt, as booster orders were unable to be filled at multiple times.

Land management plans shifted most modified response areas into limited on or about July 10. The move from initial attack response to point protection response does not necessarily equate to a reduced workload for Alaskan resources or their availability for lower-48 assignment.

Fire activity is predominately determined by the prevailing weather conditions, with almost half of the seasons in the last decade featuring significant fire activity in July, August and September. 2013 was not an exception, and Alaska couldn't provide significant numbers of jumpers to the lower 48 until the middle of August when rain finally arrived.

Military Zone fires kept the remaining jumpers busy with fire activity extending well into September. Once released, Alaska jumpers primarily provided assistance to the Great Basin and Redding bases.

Grangeville Base Report

THE GRANGEVILLE JUMPERS had a solid year locally. We jumped 59 fires, with 316 jumpers out the door. Our season started in early July and was full throttle right out of the gate. We were steadily jumping fires until Sept. 15. This year was in the top five busiest seasons since 1951 with number of jumpers out, and top 15 in number of fires staffed.

We also had boosters at the base steadily from July 15 to the middle of September. The help was needed and greatly appreciated. **Kelly Matthews** (GAC-09) was the jump king, finishing the year with 16 fire jumps.

Grangeville started with six rookies this year and finished with five. **Bryce Henderson** (Silver State IHC), **Mike Anthony** (Carson IHC), **Amanda Lane** (Bitterroot IHC), **Thomas Haney** (Oregon ODF) and **Curran Foley** (Diamond Mountain IHC) all completed rookie training on June 21, 2013. They went on to have a successful and productive rookie year, and we look forward to seeing them back next season.

Dan Mooney (WYS-07) and Matthews both detailed as GS-7 squad leaders this summer. **Russell Frei** (GAC-05) detailed as a GS-8 spotter. Russ spent three months honing his spotter skills and was signed off as

qualified in September.

Nate Hesse (RDD-01) and **Mike Blinn** (RDD-01) both detailed in as operations foreman following the retirement of **Robin Embry** (GAC-85) in September 2012. Blinn was later offered and accepted the operations foreman position in June.

GAC will be outreaching a training foreman position for 2014. Depending on how this position is filled (in house/out of house), it could create open positions from GS-9 to GS-6 in the coming months, so stay tuned if you're interested in coming to the Camas Prairie.

Lastly, a short update on **Shane Ralston** (RDD-03). Shane was banged up on the Ghost Fire Aug. 13. He sustained severe injuries to his head, shoulder, neck

and back on the jump. Shane spent better than a week in the hospital.

He said he would've been out sooner but the doctors hadn't ever had a chance to put a Neanderthal through a CT scan, so they kept him three extra days.

Shane is progressing nicely. He is currently working with physical therapists and specialists to restore the sensory and motor function in his left arm. The going is slow, but Shane is pushing himself to get back to 100 percent. If you text him and he doesn't get back to you, it's because he just got his right wrist operated on, so is technically fresh out of hands.

When I asked him how that was going the day after the surgery, he said it was fine because he never really liked clapping anyway. 🦋

Ben Musquez Jumps Again at Age 82

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

The WWII Airborne Demonstration Team Foundation was formed to honor the memory of the men who fought and died during WWII. Its members participate in active parachute jumps in the style of the WWII airborne and use aircraft that actually participated in the invasion of Europe.

This last July, **Ben Musquez** (MSO-56) went back to jump school at the Frederick Army Airfield in Frederick, Oklahoma. On July 15, 21 airborne veterans of varied ages began a four-day refresher course that culminated in a jump on July 19.

The event was to honor the 50th Anniversary of the 173rd Airborne Brigade. Ben started his military career with the 82nd Airborne and served with the 173rd in Vietnam in 1968-69.

At age 82, Ben was the oldest jumper by at least 20 years and had the honor of being the first man out the door of the historic C-47.

At 0645 the C-47, *Boogie Baby*, took off into the Oklahoma sky with its load of airborne jumpers. The *Boogie Baby* was used in several airborne assaults during WWII.

Ben said it has been over 30 years since his last jump and he is still hurting a bit. I find it amazing that he is even alive. This was no tandem jump as we see with so many news programs that feature senior citizens making a parachute jump. It was airborne all the way.

Good job Ben, I hope that I can make it out of a car door at age 82. 🦋



Mary and Ben Musquez prior to Ben's Jump. (Courtesy B. Musquez)



Ben Musquez (upper left) and group with historic C-47 "Boogie Baby" in the background. (Courtesy B. Musquez)

To Be Square, Or Not To Be

by Ralph Ryan (Redding '77)

As an aspiring loft rat in Redding in the late 1970s, the talk of the day centered on the Alaska Smokejumpers experimenting with and developing a revolutionary approach to jumping fires by way of utilizing ram-air parachutes.

The reasoning for such an approach was clearly evident: the wind. Round chutes didn't have the capacity to withstand Alaska's windy conditions, and many fires couldn't be manned because of safety concerns.

Anyone who has screamed in backward on a round could attest to this. There's nothing worse than to have a parachute that is not effectively maneuverable because of going down backward.

The growing pains were clearly evident at this time in developing a static-line system that could work like the round parachutes, but being two completely different beasts with unique deployment characteristics where the ram-air parachutes required a free-fall condition to deploy correctly. After many different approaches, the Alaska jumpers centered on implementing a static-line system for releasing a drogue chute that would stabilize the jumper in a free-fall condition with a feet-to-earth alignment.

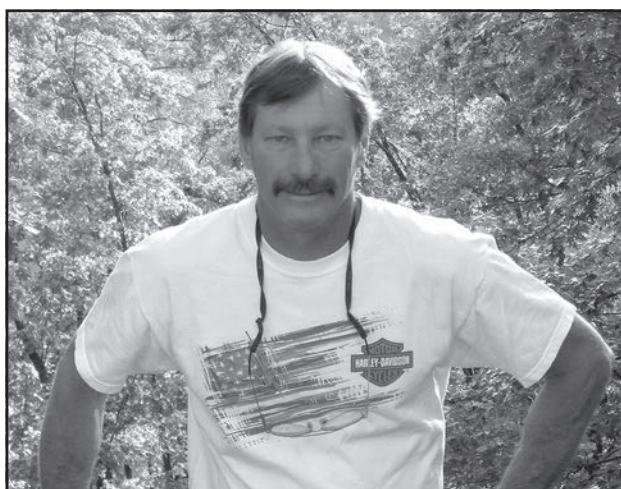
Once the jumper was stabilized, the main chute is released by way of pulling a ripcord that released the drogue, thus pulling the main from the deployment bag.

I remember a lot of resistance to this system from within the Forest Service. Maybe the suits and ties in the organization thought USFS jumpers weren't smart enough to pull a ripcord, or that such a drastic change wasn't necessary. They therefore continued to reinvent the round parachute from the approximately 9-mph forward speed of the 35-foot parabolic design T-10 (FS-10), to the experimental XP-5 (FS-11), which incorporated three different porosity materials on the T-10 frame to increase forward speed and provide better braking.

The XP-5 never made the production line in favor of the 32-foot flat circular FS-12, which was developed from a British designed parachute that also incorporated three different types of porosity material.

As my career developed and I had the opportunity to go to Alaska on fire details and booster crews, I saw the ram-air in action and was totally impressed by its maneuverability. The Alaska bros summarized their transition as stepping out of a pickup into a sports car.

With a forward glide speed of 20-30 mph, and



Ralph Ryan (Courtesy R. Ryan)

a descent rate of 14-18 feet per second to a full stall of 0 mph forward speed, and a descent rate of 20-26 feet per second, with proper technique – and I must emphasize this – the ram-air was far superior to a drag-designed parachute.

After jumping rounds primarily in California for nine seasons, I made the transition to the Bureau of Land Management. I must admit I was somewhat overwhelmed by all the malfunction possibilities and corrective measures during ram-air training, but once I was under canopy of a square, I was hooked.

I could size up a fire by flying the perimeter, scout out fishing creeks, and locate alternate landing spots before even considering my landing. As I look back on jumping in California's unforgiving terrain, I still wish I'd had a square on many of my jumps.

Once I became comfortable with the braking capability of the square, which took only one time of slamming in backward from flaring too early, I found that I could achieve an array of descent rates and forward speed conditions.

Now, the Forest Service is pushing for all bases to implement the ram-air system. I understand the California jumpers' concerns over hanging up securely in a tree with a square or making it into tight spots that have no room for error, but I also believe that with proper training in the braking and stalling techniques of a square, it can be an effective tool in California. Change is inevitable and I hope the transition goes smoothly. 🍄

THE VIEW FROM OUTSIDE THE FENCE



by **Chris Sorensen**
(Associate)

THE ARIZONA STATE Forestry Division report on the Yarnell Hill Fire has been released. I have not had time to do more than glance through the report, but I did notice that quite a few smokejumpers were involved in the investigation. A total of 54 people are listed as contributors.

The Arizona Division of Occupational Safety and Health is required to release their report no later than six months after the incident.

Prior to the release of the report, *Outside* magazine (an editor is a former hotshot), *Men's Journal*, and *Popular Mechanics* all ran excellent articles on the incident. Some of the black-and-white photos in *Outside* magazine are both noir and a little disturbing.

Whatever conclusions are drawn about the Yarnell Hill Fire, changes and improvements will be forthcoming. I envision crew-accountability systems and the delivery of real-time weather data to crews via electronic devices on the horizon.

Over the course of this past season, the National Smokejumper

Association received reports of at least three smokejumpers being injured seriously enough to be hospitalized. I am often tasked with trying to confirm these reports and that task is very difficult at best.

Due to privacy laws, like HIPAA and whatever federal land agency policies there may be, I cannot ask the smokejumpers I know for information on an injured colleague. In this instance, communication must flow from the injured smokejumpers or their families to the NSA.

If you are injured, please have someone let the NSA know so the Board of Directors can offer assistance, if it is needed. Contact information is always on the inside cover of the magazine.

The NSA's Facebook page has grown considerably since the last issue, but we still need more of you to "like" us. If you have a Facebook account, stop by and make your acquaintance. We need more photos (with names of those in the photos, please) and more discussion.

I attended the celebration of life for **Walt Currie** (MSO-75) in Great Falls, Mont., in July. More than 300 friends and family attended; I counted about 30 smokejumpers there. It was very apparent that Walt was much loved, respected and successful in everything he did. The reception at the Flamingo Lounge was still going strong when I left at 7 p.m.

Have you read *Hog's Exit* yet? All branches of the military have reading lists for every rank. If the smokejumpers had a required reading list – and they should – *Hog's Exit* should certainly be on that list.

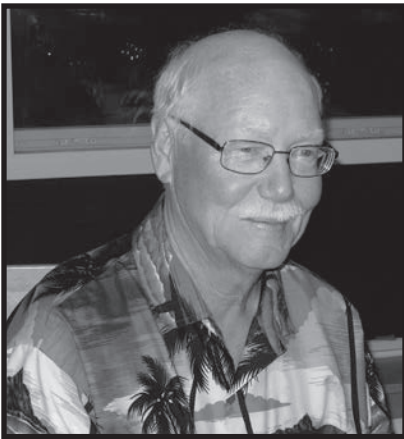
More than 600 people representing dozens of agencies attended the memorial in Boise for **Mark Urban** (NIFC-03). There was a long procession through Boise and streamers were dropped from a Twin Otter. Your association was there to assist Mark's family members in their time of need, with ushers for the service organized by **Chuck Sheley** (CJ-59) and the NSA.

There are smokejumpers at several bases that we call on over the course of a year for assistance. Sometimes it's something as simple as a name; sometimes requests are a little more complicated or time-consuming.

These smokejumpers are not only reliable but also responsive. They are the people who get things done and get them done quickly. They are among the best leaders. I won't embarrass any of you by mentioning names; you all know who you are. You all have my profound gratitude. All of you make my job tremendously easier. I am proud to know all of you.

At deadline, Chief Dan Fraijo of the Prescott (Ariz.) Fire Department was leaving the department on "mutual agreement" with the city manager. Fraijo was hired permanently by the City of Prescott in February after serving as interim chief prior to that. The city exercised a clause in his employment contract that either party could terminate employment with 30 days' notice. Apparently the chief had the backing of the firefighters union. 🕯

*This column is dedicated to **Luke Sheehy** (RDD-09) and **Mark Urban** (NIFC-03).*



John Tandberg (MYC-67)



Ashley Taylor (MYC-12) & Jerry Ogawa (MYC-67)



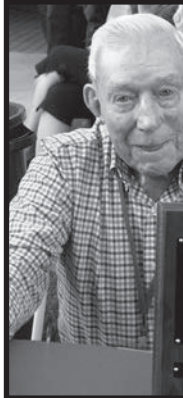
L-R: Rick Hudson (NIFC-7), Leo Cromwell (IDC-66), Neal Davis



Bobby Montoya (IDC-62), Mike Hill (MYC-69) & Francis Mohr (IDC-63)



Steve Mello (MYC-74) & Lon Warr (MYC-77)



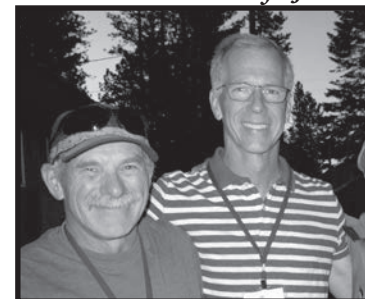
Lloyd Johnson



Fred Hatler (MYC-70) & Louie Uranga (MYC-70)



Dean Hovdey (MYC-70)



L-R: Rich Halligan (MYC-7), Tom Koyama (CJ-74) &



L-R: Hans Ohme (MYC-01), Chris Niccoli (MYC-95), Amy Ohme & Jim Duzak (MYC-84)

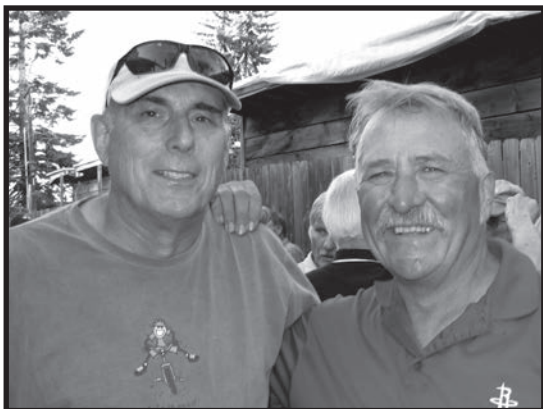


L-R: Frankie Bilbao (MYC-67), Jerry Ogawa (MYC-67), Frank I, Rich Tomich (MYC-67), Randy Gore (MYC-)

Layout Design: Johnny Kinkley (CJ-64)



73, E. W. Fields (NIFC-70),
(MYC-69), Jerry Waters (MYC-75)



Marty Gabica (MYC-69) & Jeff Bass (MYC-77)



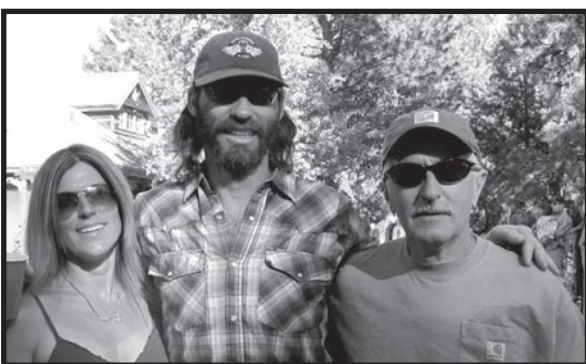
Walt Wasser (MYC-79)

Union 2013

ry Ogawa (MYC-67)



n (MYC-43)



Jamie Hill, Jeff Schricker (MYC-98) & Rod Dow (MYC-68)



John Rasmussen (MYC-59), Mike Daly (IDC-57)
& Ralph Bowyer (MYC-56)



6), Gene Manzer (BOI-79),
& Dave Hade (MYC-77)



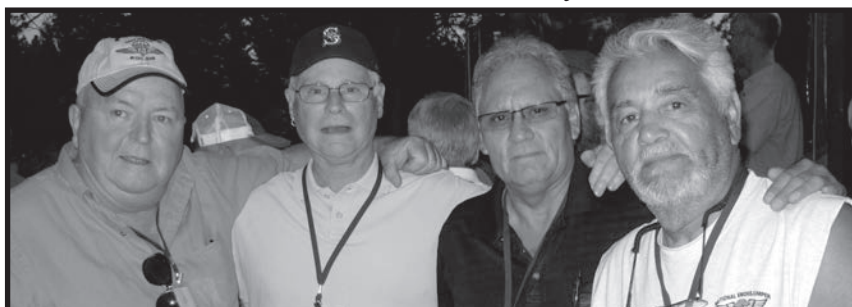
Jeff Fereday (MYC-70)



Clark Noble (MYC-70), Roger Borine (MYC-71)
& Dean Hovdey (MYC-70)



Halverson (IDC-67), Tommy Hilliard (MYC-67),
(67) & Rob Shaver (MYC-67)



L-R: Lanny Allmaras, Chuck Buescher (MYC-79), Gary Benavidez (MYC-72) &
Bobby Montoya (IDC-62)



SOUNDING OFF from the editor



by Chuck Sheley
(Cave Junction '59)
MANAGING EDITOR

IT HAS BEEN a bad season for the smokejumper community with the loss of two jumpers this season. In June California Smokejumper **Luke Sheehy** (RDD-09) was killed on the Saddleback Fire on the Modoc N.F. when a falling limb hit him. On September 27, Great Basin Smokejumper **Mark Urban** (NIFC-03) was killed during a training jump east of Boise.

I've just returned from the Memorial Service for Mark that was held at NIFC on Oct. 4th. At both memorials the NSA was honored to be asked to provide ushers. NSA board member **Tom Boatner** (FBX-80) led **Leo Cromwell** (IDC-66), **Jim Lancaster** (MYC-62), **Dick Wildman** (NCSB-61), **John Cramer** (MYC-63) and myself through our part of this event.

It is also important to report to you that, in both cases, the NSA Good Samaritan Fund provided financial help for the families. Thanks to you as NSA members for keeping that fund up and going.

In the October publication

of *Smokejumper*, I felt we did an excellent issue as a tribute to Luke Sheehy. We always print extra issues over and above our membership mailings. Requests from family and friends soon used up our supply, and we did a second print run of 100 copies to take care of all requests. The excellent work by photo editor **Johnny Kirkley** (CJ-64) added immensely to the magazine.

The April issue of *Smokejumper* will be a tribute to Mark Urban. With the help of **Mike McMillan** (FBX-96) and Mark's fellow jumpers, we will attempt to put together photographs and remembrances that will honor Mark.

WILDLAND FIREFIGHTER FOUNDATION

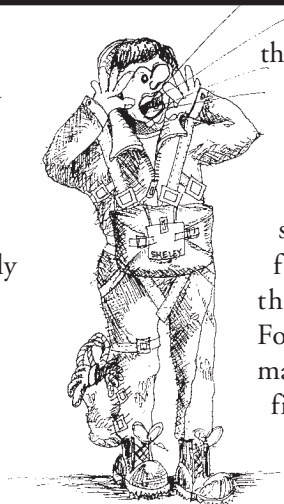
At the October NSA Board Meeting in Seattle, we heard from Burk Minor, Director of the Wildland Firefighter Foundation. It is important that you as NSA members know more about this organization.

FROM THEIR MISSION STATEMENT

Wildland Firefighter Foundation's main focus is to help families of firefighters killed in the line of duty and to assist injured firefighters and their families.

ABOUT THEIR ORGANIZATION

The Foundation came together as a group of volunteers in 1994, shortly after the Storm King tragedy. Our board members realized



that there was a great need to have emergency support services for the families of fallen firefighters. Active volunteers and supporters of wildland firefighters established the Wildland Firefighter Foundation, a 501(c) 3, to maintain the Wildland Firefighters National Monument at the National Interagency Fire Center (NIFC) in Boise, Idaho.

Since 1999, the Foundation has also provided

emergency support services to the families of firefighters seriously injured or killed in the line of duty. Families left behind, many with young children, often find themselves with few resources, and the Foundation steps in to help.

The foundation has a 52 Club where donors give a dollar for each week of the year. Donations at other levels also can be done. You can read more and donate at their website: www.wffoundation.org or call (208) 336-2996. The WFF deserves our support. If we all joined the 52 Club it would be the right thing to do.

During the third week in September, my wife, K.G., and I hosted the Siskiyou Smokejumper Museum for a week. The museum now consists of three buildings that have been restored and saved for future generations. The visitors are all given personal tours through the museum, which is open nine months a year. **Gar Buck** (CJ-66) handles the majority of the tours that start in the 1936 era administra-

tion building.

From there visitors move on to the oldest smokejumper loft in the U.S. where they see parachutes hanging in the “well” and laid out on the rigging tables. Numerous enlarged photos have been added to the loft walls. The ready room hangers are full of jump gear ready for the fire call.

The tour finishes in the mess hall that has been transformed into a visitor’s center where the visitor can see numerous historic photos and sign the visitor’s book. For those days where we do not have a host, visitors can

follow a walking tour where they can read the information and see photos on a series of outside kiosks.

This summer the workweek crew put shingles on the mess hall and the bathhouse. Add that to the new split-rail fence surrounding the area and we have a first class looking facility.

We get many visitors who frequent museums as they travel around the country. What distinguishes the Siskiyou Smokejumper Museum from the others according to many? It is “The Story.” For 38 years a small group

of smokejumpers protected one of the largest timber areas in the U.S. Add in a 1942 bombing of the Siskiyou N.F. by a Japanese aircraft and you have some interesting history that most people have never heard before.

The back of the visitor’s center has been made into a nice apartment for people who stay to host the museum. We can use more help along this line. If you are interested in helping us out, please get a hold of me. We need more hosts. You will have a great time telling visitor’s about smokejumping. 🌲

Published Articles About Your *Smokejumper* Editors

Johnny Kirkley, *Smokejumper* Photo Editor

Summer Job As A Smokejumper Prepared Northport Native For A Life Of Adventure

by Delbert Reed

(Copyright 2013, the Northport Gazette, Northport, Ala.)

Northport, Ala., native Johnny Kirkley (CJ-64) simply refuses to relax and enjoy the good life he discovered on the serene Hawaiian island paradise of Maui, nearly 30 years ago. And if anyone ever deserved a little peace and quiet, it is Johnny Kirkley.

Kirkley doesn’t return to Northport often, but recently notified friends and family that he plans to return in March for a reunion of University of Alabama track teammates from the 1960s. That is especially good news for his mother, 91-year-old Grace Kirkley, and his brother Ray Kirkley, both of Northport. Johnny was last home in August 2011 to celebrate his mother’s 90th birthday and to attend his 50th high school graduation reunion.

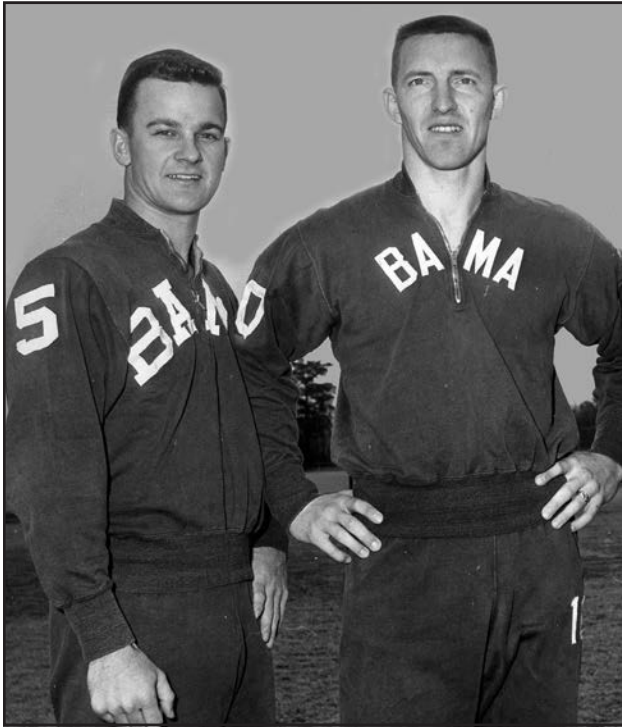
Before moving to Hawaii 28 years ago, Johnny had a knack for making a splash now and then, if not downright living on the edge, due to his philosophy of living life to the fullest. He has led an active life in Hawaii, too, and continues to do so today.

Kirkley, now age 69, is a 1961 graduate of Tuscaloosa County High School, where he was an outstanding performer on both the football and track teams. Even before high school, Kirkley earned local fame as an athlete by striking out 15 of 18 batters in a six-inning YMCA youth baseball game at age 11.

A two-year starter as a speedy halfback at TCHS, Kirkley played football for coaches Cecil “Hootie” Ingram and Billy Williams and was co-captain of the 1960 team. He scored several touchdowns for the Wildcats, including one on an 85-yard kickoff return.

Kirkley also played junior high basketball under Coach H.F. Eubanks, who spotted his potential as a sprinter and encouraged him to join the TCHS track team, which Eubanks also coached. The move paid off handsomely for Kirkley a few years later when he was offered a full, four-year track grant-in-aid to the University of Alabama.

“I was state champion in the 220-yard dash and second in the 100 as a junior,” Kirkley recently recalled. “My best high school meet came in the Florida



Johnny Kirkley, Smokejumper Photo Editor, and Charley Moseley. 1963 Alabama Track Team. (Courtesy J. Kirkley)

Relays during my senior year, when I tied the meet record in the 100-yard dash twice (preliminary heat and semifinals) with a time of 9.8 seconds and won the championship with a 9.9 time.”

That performance earned him scholarship offers not only from Alabama, but from several other colleges, and he went on to a successful track career for the Crimson Tide, winning several 100- and 220-yard events and helping win several relay events during his career.

“One of my most memorable meets was the Memphis Relays in March of 1963,” Kirkley said. “It was the first time I had competed against black athletes, and out of approximately 70 entrants in the 60-yard dash, I was the only white guy to make the finals. I ran one of my best times ever at 6.2 seconds and placed fourth. The winning time of 5.9 seconds tied the world record at the time, and that was especially amazing because we ran on an indoor dirt track in an arena used for rodeo events,” he added.

Kirkley roomed with fellow track star **Charley Moseley** (CJ-62) for two of his four years at the University of Alabama, and Moseley’s tales of his adventures as a smokejumper during the summers prompted Kirkley to join the crews fighting forest fires in the mountains of the northwest U.S. during the summers of 1964 and 1965.

Kirkley had his initial training as a smokejumper at

the Siskiyou Aerial Project, a U.S. Forest Service base five miles south of Cave Junction, Ore., in the summer of 1964, and he said there was plenty to learn.

“Jumping from an airplane into blazing high timber on remote mountain terrain guarantees exposure to danger,” he said. “Obstacles range from widow-making dead snags to hidden boulders on landing areas thick with poison oak and rattlesnakes.”

And don’t forget the choking smoke and heavy backpack loaded with equipment.

“Being a smokejumper is about being in the present, having the courage to work past the fear by doing what needs to be done,” Kirkley said. “When living on the fringe of disaster, there is a fine line between success and failure. Events unfold unpredictably, so you have to focus on the task at hand. We rookies learned to be aware, awake and trust our instincts, and with experience came calmness under pressure.”

Following six weeks of ground training, Kirkley was ready to make his first parachute jump, and he refused to say that he was not at least a little nervous.

“Being first in the door of a Twin Beech with the first load of rookies, on my very first airplane ride, on my first parachute jump, was exhilarating, but the weeks of rugged training still didn’t relieve the anxiety and uncertainty of the moment,” he said. “Waiting in the door with the deafening roar of the engine and the plane’s prop blast flapping your jump suit, anticipating a 2,000-foot jump, makes you wonder what the hell you’re doing up there,” he laughed.

The sudden jerk of the parachute opening on his first jump turned anxiety into relief and excitement for Kirkley, and he said riding the cool morning air to the jump site left him with a natural high for the rest of the day. That, and the \$181 bi-weekly paycheck he received for 80 hours of work, made it all worthwhile, he said.

Kirkley made approximately 30 jumps during his years as a smokejumper and later with Air America, but that first one is naturally the one he remembers most.

“That was the era of my youth,” Kirkley said, “those bulletproof years when all things seemed possible and disappointment appeared remote. It was my rite of passage, my transformation into manhood. All my personal, mental and physical traits were revealed as I made the transition from a superficial, egotistical youth to a mature human being.

“As a smokejumper, I acquired a base of self confidence that made me believe I could do anything I wanted to in the future, and that confidence has remained with me as my quest for adventure has carried me through life,” he added.

“In 1965, there were more lightning strikes and

more wildfires than in 1964, so we were busy most of the summer on the fire line,” Kirkley said.

Moseley, who set numerous school and Southeastern Conference track records while at Alabama, moved on to a new adventure in the summer of 1965 when he joined Air America, Inc., an arm of the U.S. Central Intelligence Agency (CIA), which was becoming involved in the war in Vietnam and neighboring Laos in Southeast Asia.

Moseley sent Air America applications to Kirkley and other smokejumpers in Oregon, looking for old friends who wanted to kick the excitement up a notch and perhaps earn a lot more money by adding actual warfare to the equation.

Kirkley quickly applied with Air America but was initially rejected because he had a semester remaining in school. He returned to the University of Alabama and started the fall semester only to have Air America contact him and offer him a job six weeks later. He dropped out of college needing only 12 hours to graduate and by mid-November found himself in Vientiane, Laos, taking part in the not-so-secret operations in connection with the war in Vietnam.

“All our missions were directed by the CIA and most were covert, clandestine and not to be discussed,” Kirkley said. “Smokejumping and working as an AFS (air freight specialist) were both hazardous jobs, but at least you weren’t being shot at as a smokejumper.

“Flying in a war zone is like walking up to the edge of eternity and peering over into the abyss,” Kirkley added. “Life narrowed down to being in the moment one flight at a time. You became accustomed to uncertainty and death. In war, dying is a daily part of the job and you learned to deal with it.

“Many of my good friends were killed in Laos, including my housemate, Jack Houston, who was shot in the head,” Kirkley continued. “Another good friend with whom I had trained as a smokejumper, Ed Weissenback (RAC-64), was in a plane that was shot down and his body

has never been recovered. One C-130 crashed into Phu Bia, the highest mountain in Laos, killing all on board.

“There were other guys doing the same job as I was who jumped out of shot-up planes only to be captured by the enemy and never seen again,” he added.

“Seeing and experiencing death at a young age influenced me in realizing the impermanence of life,” Kirkley said. “I formed a mindset to live my life without fear. Death is just a part of life on this planet. Fear of dying only gets in the way of living. To avoid being fearful, I began trusting my instincts and intuition in all aspects of my life and it is something I still rely on today.”

One of Kirkley’s principal missions in Laos was to drop food, ammunition and other supplies to forward observers in the jungles along the Ho Chi Minh Trail, and he said night drops along the Mu Gia Pass were the most dangerous missions of his four years with Air America.

“The Onmark B-26 planes were equipped with all-terrain guidance systems that allowed us to fly at night at treetop level to avoid radar detection and the mountains, and our (two men) job was to drop pallets of supplies to our military teams through a 3-foot-by-3-foot hole in the floor of the plane.

“When the North Vietnamese heard our engines overhead, they would immediately open fire with their antiaircraft guns and the sky would light up like the Fourth of July,” Kirkley said. “Early on there was



Kirkley with Air America 1966. (Courtesy J. Kirkley)

small-caliber (37 mm) artillery, then larger-caliber (100 mm) by 1966.

"Flying at night just above the treetops at 250 miles an hour in a B-26 was an all-in happening," Kirkley said. "We referred to that plane as the 'flying coffin' because once you were sealed in you were along for the ride until the mission was over. There was not enough air at tree-top level for a parachute to open if you needed to jump out, and although none of these missions was ever shot down, we definitely got an up-close and personal view of the war with its exploding sounds and flashing colors," he added.

Kirkley was later selected as one of seven air-freight specialists sent to Takhli, Thailand, on a secret mission to train to jump and drop freight from a commercial Boeing 727 jet. "There was unrest in Tibet on the Chinese border and the CIA wanted to do some tests to see if it was feasible to make high-altitude drops of paratroopers and cargo from a 727," he said.

After making a few jumps and dropping several loads of cargo, Kirkley said the mission was eventually scrubbed.

"Fast-forward to the first week in December of 1971 in Anchorage, Alaska," Kirkley said, continuing his story about being trained to jump from the back of a Boeing 727. "I was in my second year of owning and operating the Polar Bar on Fifth Avenue in downtown Anchorage. I was having a cup of coffee and talking to a customer when two men dressed in suits entered the bar. They showed me their FBI identifications and told me that they were investigating a skyjacking that had taken place in Portland, Ore., on Nov. 24, the day before Thanksgiving.

"A man called D.B. Cooper had extorted the airline out of \$200,000 and jumped from the rear of a Boeing 727 over Oregon. They told me they knew that I had jumped out of a 727 when I was working with Air America," he said.

"They then showed me a picture of the suspect and asked if I recognized him. I told him that he looked like **Louie Banta** (CJ-51), who had been a smokejumper in Oregon and worked with me in Air America, although I didn't recall him being one of the seven who jumped on the 727 project in Thailand. As it turned out, Louie also lived in Oregon, where D.B. Cooper deplored, but Banta was thoroughly exonerated and Cooper has never been found.

"Over the years since, it has become a standing joke at smokejumper and Air America reunions that D.B. Cooper lives," Kirkley laughed, adding that his close friend and former Alabama track teammate Charley Moseley was also questioned by the FBI about the still-unsolved D.B. Cooper incident.

After spending three years with Air America, Kirkley took time off to return to the University of Alabama to complete work for his degree in Commerce and Business Administration, although he said he was stunned to find that he then needed 27 hours to graduate rather than the 12 he needed three years earlier. He graduated in January 1969 and returned to his job in Laos, again dropping food and ammunition to front-line troops and being shot at on a daily basis for several more months.

"I finally decided that after four years of flying the unfriendly skies of Southeast Asia that I had used up my nine lives," Kirkley said. "I asked to be transferred to the Air America administrative offices in Taiwan, as an accountant, and was assigned there in the summer of 1969."

Kirkley, accustomed to living on the edge for years, didn't last long at the desk job, however. "After jumping into wildfires and flying in the war for the past six years, it didn't take me long to figure out that accounting was a little too mundane for me," he said. "There wasn't much of an adrenaline rush in sitting behind a desk counting tires on a spreadsheet. It didn't add up to me, so to speak."

By then, Moseley and a couple of other smokejumpers were in Alaska, where they were now fighting wildfires near Fairbanks.

"We all thought big things were about to happen there with the building of the Trans-Alaska Pipeline," Kirkley said. "In August 1969 I took a couple of weeks off and flew to Fairbanks to check it out. After a few days, I sent a telegram to Air America tendering my resignation, thus ending my Southeast Asia war years and beginning a 15-year stay in Alaska."

Kirkley spent the 1970 fire season as a roadside fire foreman for an engine crew, managing 10 firefighters with three trucks and earning more money than he could as a smokejumper. At the end of the 1970 fire season, he was offered a partnership in the Polar Bar in Anchorage, and that venture was the start of a long and successful business phase in his life.

"The Trans-Alaska Pipeline was Alaska's second gold rush," Kirkley said. "It was an exciting time and things were happening on a grand scale." Between 1970 and 1984, Kirkley was co-owner of nine bars, restaurants and other businesses, including an excavating and construction company, most of them in Fairbanks and Anchorage.

He married Mindy Dingman on Dec. 24, 1970, with Moseley as his best man. The marriage lasted almost eight years and produced Kirkley's only child, a daughter named Tracey who is a graduate of Washington State University and lives near Seattle, where she



Johnny Kirkley CJ Rookie. (Courtesy J. Kirkley)

works as a physician's assistant.

After six years, the Alaska winters began to get to Kirkley. "During November 1976 it was freezer-cold in Fairbanks," he said. "The temperature had not moved off 55 degrees below zero for 10 short days and long nights straight. Then one day it dawned on me: Hey, Hawaii! After a six-hour flight to Honolulu, I stepped off the plane into a sunny 12-hour day at 85 degrees. I knew then why it was called paradise!"

Kirkley took a vacation to Hawaii every winter for the next eight years. The vacations started at two weeks and got longer each year, he said. "In March 1984, after being in Hawaii for three months, I returned to Fairbanks, where I was greeted by afternoon darkness and 35-below-zero temperatures," he said. "It only took me one week to decide that it was time for me to relocate to a warmer climate. In 90 days I sold my house, my car and my business and moved to Maui in June of 1984."

Kirkley went into the real estate business in Maui, and by 1987 had his own development company and was designing, building and selling affluent homes. He has also dabbled in organic farming and become

an accomplished photographer during his years in Hawaii.

And, just to scratch his usual adventurous itch, Kirkley attended a Hawaiian Sovereignty meeting in 1993 and became involved in the movement "to try to help the Hawaiians in their quest to get back the independence that was taken from them in the overthrow of their sovereign government in 1893."

He is also active in several other organizations dedicated to helping native Hawaiians.

Therein lies the proof that Kirkley is still the adventurous, slightly off-beat sort of guy that his friends back home remember. He is still the guy willing to take part in whatever game is in town, the guy always ready for any challenge, the guy still unafraid of the unknown. And he, unlike so many, knows well the reason he is the way he is.

"Prior to my 20th birthday, there were five untimely deaths in my immediate family over a period of four years," Kirkley explained. "That included my dad, Jack Kirkley, who was killed in an automobile accident on Feb. 22, 1963, at age 39.

"Those events motivated me to not take life for granted or too seriously and to enjoy life to the fullest," he added. "I have always trusted in my intuition, perception and consciousness in all matters of decision. I have never let the fear of the unknown affect my course of action. I have always felt that life should be an adventure and the things I have done have always led me down a path to the next thing."

Kirkley has always worked and played at full speed, much like his friend Charley Moseley, who still chases oil in Oklahoma despite a heart he has just about worn out and always driving in the fast lane.

Having Johnny and Charley back in town in March will be a special, perhaps last of a lifetime reunion for them, their former Crimson Tide track teammates and other friends from half a century ago. They have some stories to tell about the dreams and girls they have chased during the sometimes-foolhardy lives they have lived, and I can't wait to hear a few more of them. 🦉

“As Long As I’m Having Fun”

by Mary Nugent

(Reprinted from the Chico Enterprise-Record May 2012)

Chuck Sheley (CJ-59) likes sports. He likes adventure, and he likes to work. He’s 73, and instead of slowing down, he’s found ways to stay productive and engaged with people and things that matter to him.

He’s retired, but he still coaches Track and Field at Chico High School, his alma mater. “This is my 50th year. I plan to keep going as long as I’m having fun,” he said.

His experience includes working as a teacher and coach for 36 years at Chico Jr. H.S. and Chico High schools. He has worked closely with fellow coaches Dale Edson and Bob Noe. “We’ve won 30 league championships out of the last 37 years and been together since the 60s.”

A Chico native, Sheley graduated from Chico High in 1956 and Chico State University in 1960. He was named to the Chico Sports Hall of Fame in 2005.

The time between graduations led to a profession that Sheley hadn’t anticipated. While attending Chico State, he worked on an engine crew for the USFS near Susanville, Calif.

That led to a job as a smokejumper. These wildland firefighters parachute into remote areas to control growing fires. These are areas that would take vehicles hours to get to.

Smokejumping is a much sought-after job, said Sheley. “There are about 20 openings a year (nationally), and many applicants. People compete for these jobs. There are 400 smokejumpers in the country -an average of 14 of them are women.”

Sheley was a smokejumper for 13 years, working in Alaska and Oregon. “Sometimes I’d be teaching at Chico Jr. High on a Friday and be in Fairbanks, Alaska, by Sunday afternoon for smokejumping. Sometimes I could take my family for the summer, which was great.”

He had 32 years fire experience with the USFS/BLM as a smokejumper and later as a fire crew coordinator.

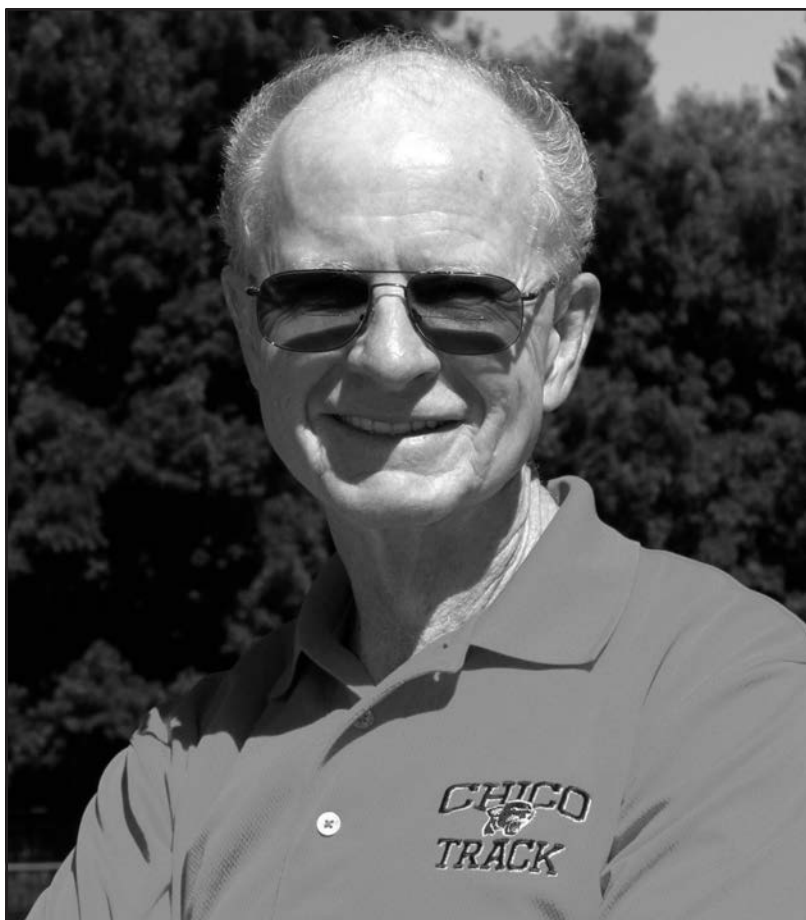
Sheley looks back on the students he taught in the Chico Unified School District and those he worked with in the USFS. “There were more than 20,000 of them,” he said.

Sheley became the editor of *Smokejumper* magazine, a quarterly publication of the National Smokejumper Association, in 1999. His wife of 50 years, K.G. Sheley, helps him edit the magazine.

As the end of the school year approaches, Sheley coached a couple athletes as they ran hurdles on the track. In high school and college he ran hurdles, the 440 and Mile Relay events.

Sheley now officiates many track and field meets including the North Section Championships, the Stanford Invitational and the California Collegiate Championships.

He said there are many success stories of teenagers who have benefited from track and field. “There was one young man whose father was a Merchant Marine captain, and gone 10 or 11 months a year. Track kept this boy in school,” he said, recalling the boy finished college, served in the US Navy (Lt. Commander) and is now a coach and teacher. 🏆



Smokejumper editor Chuck Sheley. (Photo by Ty Barbour, Courtesy Chico Enterprise-Record)

When The Wild Ones Are Tame

by LeRoy Cook (Cave Junction '64)

In this season when many of us often sit by the window pondering the silhouette of the landscape and the breeze becomes a bit more sinister, it's my custom to put food out for the birds. Here in the North, dawns are cold, and with the snow-bleached margins, the tolerances for living become a bit more narrowed.

Wild birds make the sunrise more colorful and watching them fills in my morning spaces. Regular visitors, they come in riding the heavy air from unknown places out beyond the reach of my vision. The bird feeder is an old tradition.

Cheerful, restless, fussy, or frail, each is full of anticipation with prospects of free food. Adjusting to my convenience store, they become mountaineers, no longer free men. Some grab and run while others, like unruly children, stay and argue over the spoils. All cargo up and carry off the dry goods.

Like people, birds are recognized primarily on the basis of their outward appearance. Some are dressed in iridescent feathers that flash in the light, embellishing a lustrous hue. A few are stocky street brawlers that will never win any beauty contest.

Some never tire of hearing their own voices while others are masters of camouflage. There are river pirates stealing from fellow travelers; even the quiet loners, those least noticeable, can sometimes be seen.

My reaction to appearances is predictable, part of being human, perhaps. Today's visual traits provide such a plethora of information that quietly portray who we are. Experiencing society's ever-evolving standard of acceptable appearance can put me on an unequal footing.

Yes, I brood with today's dress as folks shuffle to and fro, seeking goods at the local "get 'em" store.

I'm not the guardian of manners or morals, but style and fashion have changed. With each generation newfangled images appear, portraying a changing culture and revealing the new character of our country's clan.

It's easy to admire those whose dress and behavior reveals strength and character. I see many young men now, innocent in their unknown crime against my standards of humble but manly attire. Too judgmental, perhaps; I guess it's hard to find something if others don't know what you're looking for. I wonder how I'd

dress if I were their age.

Like it or not, living with change is normal, for today's luxuries become tomorrow's necessities. Sometimes I do see things in today's youth – glimpses and rare sightings of dress and behavior that epitomize my bygone days. For an older man, perhaps this represents a tribute to wishful thinking.

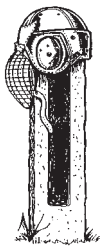
These sights can stir old feelings and awaken pleasant memories; like an old song I'm taken back on a journey where only I once traveled.

It's hard to describe, but there's something unknown in all of us from the past that's been handed down from earlier survivors of hard times. We all came from the past; nameless descendents born of the dust and matter of long ago by **God's** hand.

Merry Christmas. 🕯



McCall Base Reunion June 2013 Heidi Summerfield (MYC-05) and Jim Duzak (MYC-84) (Courtesy J. Duzak)



Off The List

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

Chuck Sheley
10 Judy Lane
Chico, CA 95926

William G. "Bill" Peay (Cave Junction '60)

Bill died July 14, 2013, in Quincy, California, after a long battle with prostate cancer. He had a 33-year career with the USFS, retiring from the Plumas N.F. in 1998. Bill served in the Army National Guard from 1957-1964. After his retirement from the forest service, he went to work for Sierra Pacific Industries for 13 more years.

Bill served on the Quincy Community Television Board of Directors and was a longtime member of the Quincy Community Services District. He jumped at Cave Junction in 1960 and suffered an injury on his first fire jump, which ended his smokejumping career.

Dean J. Weeden (Missoula '57)

Dean, 82, died July 17, 2013, in Eureka, Montana. He got his first job with the Forest Service at age 17 in Idaho before entering the Air Force in 1951, where he served as a surgery technician stationed in Korea. After the war he jumped at Missoula in 1957, while earning his bachelor's degree in forestry from the university. His first job with the Forest Service was in Alaska where he moved from junior forester to District Ranger in four years.

Dean's 33-year career with the USFS included his work as ranger on the Tongass N.F. and Kootenai N.F. and as recreation and lands staff officer on the Tongass.

Harold 'Hal' Werner (North Cascades '48)

Hal, 82, died Aug. 4, 2013, in Leavenworth, Washington. Following service in the U.S. Air Force in the Korean War in 1951-55, Hal resumed jumping, spending the 1955 season in Cave Junction and 1957 in Redding. He then returned to get his degree in Physical Education from Brigham Young University and later his master's from Washington State, where he completed the first study on javelin technique ever conducted on the West Coast.

Hal had a throw of 224 feet, 9 inches for BYU in 1956, qualifying him for the NCAA championships. He competed internationally that summer and had a career-best throw of 232-4, and a personal best of 232-10 with a wooden javelin in Finland.

Hal coached at Eastern Washington, Simon Fraser, Whitworth and St. Martin's universities, as well as in Kuwait, Hungary, Ghana, Burundi, Mexico and Syria. His coaching and teaching career spanned 51 years, with retirement in 2010; he also operated Ptar-migan Products, which produced insoles for athletes' shoes.

Hal was to have been inducted in the Eastern Washington University Athletic Hall of Fame Oct. 5 but will now be honored posthumously. He trained at North Cascades in 1948 and jumped there through 1951 before his military service.

Joseph Eigsti (North Cascades '45)

Joseph, 91, died Sept. 3, 2013, in Goshen, Indiana. Due to his Mennonite faith, he did not join the military during World War II but instead enrolled in the CPS-103 program for conscientious objectors. Joseph jumped at North Cascades for the 1945 season. He was a farmer most of his life, and also served as a school board member and on the Elkhart County Farm Bureau board.

Carroll J. "Buck" Stucky (Missoula '53)

Buck died September 8, 2013. He served in the US Army in the late 40s and was stationed in Korea. Buck jumped at Missoula in 1953 and Grangeville in 1954. He later worked as a logger and settled in Belgrade where he worked as a painter. After retirement he moved to Lewiston.

Argus Black (Missoula '61)

Argus died September 25, 2013, at St. Patrick Hospital in Missoula of natural causes. He jumped at Missoula from 1961-1965 and was a member of the National Guard Special Forces Unit. Argus moved to Dillon in 1967 where he was Fire Control Officer on the Dillon District of the Beaverhead N.F.

John Muraro (Missoula '57)

John, 78, died Sept. 20, 2013, in Victoria, British Columbia. He earned bachelor's and master's degrees in Fire Science from Montana State University in

1960, and immediately began his professional career with the Canadian Forest Service at the newly opened Federal Research Institute in Victoria.

Prior to attending college, John was a timber cruiser in the Nelson Forest office in British Columbia, whose district forester urged him to continue his education. John jumped at Missoula during the 1957-60 seasons.

John's collaboration and support from others resulted in new technologies, products and tools. One of his first projects in the Canadian Forest Service led to John's effective ignition techniques for both logging slash and standing timber fires. He and colleagues also developed airborne ignition machines, including the helitorch and a dispenser of injected spherical incendiaries. These machines and techniques are in use globally today.

John and colleagues also produced automated fire weather stations to collect and transmit data from remote sites to central offices. John was a source of ideas for the fledgling Canadian Forest Fire Danger Rating System, under development by CFS in the 1960s. His modular concepts for a "Universal Burning Index" were adopted by the CFS Fire Danger Group as the Canadian Forest Fire Behavior Prediction System, a system still in use across Canada today.

John started Climax Land Management, a venture working with the ranchers clearing rangeland and

harvesting timber for portable mills. John was one of the first to utilize pine trees killed by beetles for dimensional lumber. John wrapped up his career by operating Baseline Prescriptions, providing all aspects of Silviculture.

Mark T. Urban (NIFC-03)

Mark died September 27, 2013, while making a training jump on to a field near Prairie, Idaho, about 45 miles east of Boise. He was a 10-year jumper with 324 jumps including 102 fire jumps.

Mark received a degree in Building Materials and Wood Technology from the University of Massachusetts and served in the Air National Guard from 1991-1997.

He began his career as a wildland firefighter in 1999 with the U.S. Forest Service joining the BLM Great Basin Smokejumpers in 2003. He was an avid bicyclist and contributor to the Boise Bicycle Project. Mark is survived by his wife, Rebecca.

William F. "Willie" VonBracht (Missoula '66)

Willie died July 8, 2012, at his residence in Kalispell. He jumped at Missoula 1968-70 and was a member of the infamous Squad VI, New Man Squad 1968. Willie joins Bert Tanner from SQ VI as "Off the List." The other seven stand tall and ready. 🕯

NSA Good Samaritan Fund Contributions

Contributions since the previous publication of donors October 2013

Donor

In Memory/Honor of

Larry Nelsen (MSO-56)	Finn Ward
Gary/Mary Boyd	Finn Ward
2013 Selway Bridge Creek Crew.....	Jim Renshaw
Bill Edlund (MSO-48)	Phil McVey (MSO-48)
Leverett Hubbard	Scott Wicklund (NCSB-91)
North Cascades Smokejumpers	Mark Urban (NIFC-03)
Bill Woolworth (MSO-68)	Bert Tanner (MSO-68)
	Willie Von Bracht (MSO-68)
Carol Tracy (Assoc)	Mark Urban (NIFC-03)
Bill Mills (MSO-65).....	Mark Urban (NIFC-03)
Eddie Yosick (MYC-81)	Doug Abromeit (MYC-71)
Bruce Marshall (BOI-71)	Mark Urban (NIFC-03)
Jim Lancaster (MYC-62)	Mark Urban (NIFC-03)

Total funds disbursed to smokejumpers and families since 2004—\$31,253

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



ODDS AND ENDS



by **Chuck Sheley**

Congratulations and thanks to **Don H. Bill** (IDC-69), **David Dayton** (MSO-69), **Bill Cramer** (NIFC-90), **John Rohrbach** (MSO-67) and **John Packard** (RAC-65) who just became our latest **Life Members**.

George Harpole (MSO-49) sent along a good story about himself and **Danny On** (CJ-46). In 1951 they both did an exhibition free-fall jump to open the Spokane Stampede Rodeo. Jumping from 4,000 feet in a cold wind, George was blown past the arena and landed in the street outside the rodeo.

"The real kick was they gave us several complementary tickets for the rodeo. I gave three tickets to my Uncle Wesley, who lived outside of Spokane in Cheney. Remember, there were some 2,800 people that attended the rodeo. Uncle Wesley came in from outside of town. When I hit the street and skidded on my belly across the street to stop at the curb, I looked up to say, 'Hi, Uncle Wesley.' His wife, Edna, and daughter, Janet, helped me get up and gather my parachute."

Danny followed George, jumping with three parachutes. He did a cut-away after his first opening and continued his fall before opening his second chute.

"Yes, Danny On and I did it for \$200 each, which was a lot in 1951 dollars."

Scott Warner (RDD-69): "Yester-



day afternoon, I put the plaque (NSA-KIA Plaque), with **Luke Sheehy** (RDD-09) added, back on the Redding loft wall back near the tower. The Redding jumpers send their appreciation. Most feel Luke is still there, just around the corner or maybe out on a fire, or standing by at a California spike base or stuck on a boost somewhere."

Shirley Hagen (Susanville, CA): "Chuck, thank you for sending the National Smokejumper magazine to us. It is still hard to believe that Luke isn't with us, only in our hearts. Luke was gentle with young and old and, oh, that smile."

Debi Howe (Sweet Home, OR): "I knew Luke his entire life, and he was truly an amazing young man. Thank you for everything you have done for his family. Doug (father) said that it was very moving and comforting to the family and that is so important right now."

Smokejumper magazine Photo Editor **Johnny Kirkley** (CJ-64): "**Jerry Ogawa** (MYC-67) gets the 'Atta Boy' Award for a great job taking photos and identifying jumpers at the McCall Reunion displayed on the Center Page of this issue."

Got a note from **Bob Derry** (MSO-43) with a contribution to our Good Samaritan Fund. Bob's wife passed away last December but they were married 75 years. There must be very few couples who have accomplished that. Bob is the youngest of the Derry brothers who were the first smokejumpers taking part in the 1939 program at Winthrop.

In Montana the American Legion puts up white crosses beside the road where someone died on the road in a car, but they don't do it for someone who dies while riding a bicycle on the road. **Jon McBride** (MSO-54) was bicycling with a group of guys from Missoula called the Boys on Wednesday (BOWs) when he had a heart attack and died on a frontage road next to I-90 about 40 miles east of Missoula.

On October 9, the BOWs put up a white cross where Jon died. Former smokejumpers who participated with other BOWs were **Chuck Fricke** (MSO-61), **Jim Hagemeier** (MSO-57), **Ted Nyquest** (MSO-54), **Bob Schumaker** (MSO-59), **Roy Williams** (MSO-60) and **Gary Weyermann** (MSO-63). 🕯

NSA 2013 Jukkala/McBride Scholarship Award Winners

Each year the NSA awards three \$2,000 scholarships that are intended to provide financial support to students who are committed to obtaining advanced education. Expanded details can be found on the NSA website, www.smokejumpers.com, under the “Outreach” pull down.

Next year, we will be adding the **Donald E. Maypole** (IDC-54) scholarship created by his daughter, Kristin, in honor of Don.

There were nine applicants for this year’s awards. Let’s take a look at the three selected by the NSA Scholarship Committee, headed up by **Gary Baker** (MSO-67).



Ian Dooley (Courtesy Mike McMillan)

Ian Dooley (FBX-08)

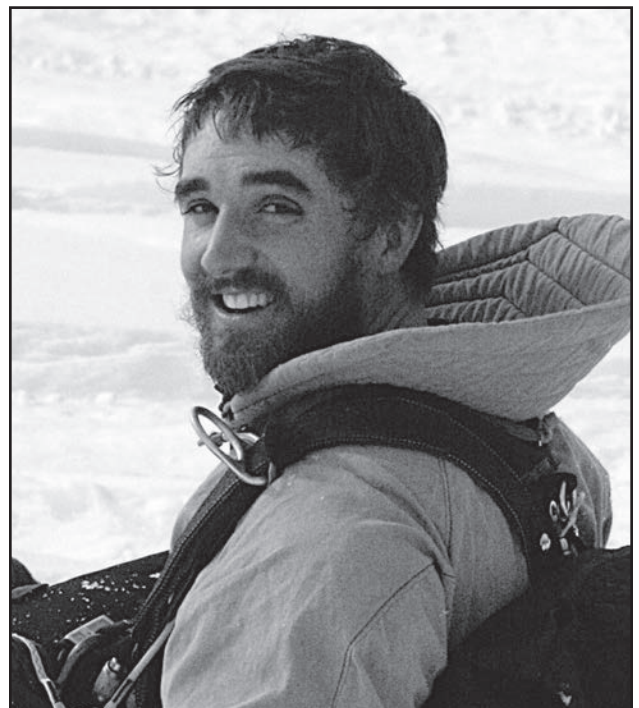
Ian had been an Alaska Smokejumper for five seasons before resigning his position to pursue his legal education on the east coast. He completed his first year at Brooklyn Law School last May, finishing his first semester with a 3.18 GPA.

In his application Ian says, “Through law school, I intend to balance the problem-solving and organizational experience I gained as a smokejumper and wildland fire-

fighter with an arduous and disciplined legal education. Communication, discipline, and attention to detail are but a few of the skills and ethics I acquired as a jumper that will aid me in my mission to do well in law school and to be adequately prepared for a life in public service.

“If I had not been an Alaska Smokejumper, I doubt very much that I would have the resolve to complete my education or have the foresight to recognize that the largest rewards are reaped from the greatest challenges.

“After law school I hope to return to smokejumping. During the off-season, I will use my law degree to work for non-profit organizations in order to help improve the lives of persons disadvantaged by their socioeconomic status.”



Chris Wennogle (Courtesy Mike McMillan)

Chris Wennogle (FBX-07)

Chris has been an Alaska Smokejumper for the past six seasons and has enrolled in a Master’s of Natural Resources program at Colorado State University.

In his application Chris says, “My knowledge in natural resource management has been gained primarily through job training and experience, early in my career, while working for the National Park Service.

“After working as a biological technician, I continued

to grow through experiences as a wildland firefighter with the USFS. As a member of the Flathead Hotshots and Truckee Hand Crew, I learned the value of discipline, determination, hard work and teamwork. These experiences have proven invaluable, professionally and personally.

"I later continued my career development with the Bureau of Land Management as an Alaska Smokejumper. As a member of this organization, I learned to solve problems with ingenuity, and have proven to be an effective leader, especially when faced with adversity and hardship.

"My plan is to continue to work as an Alaska Smokejumper during the fire season, while attending graduate school. I will only be able to work a three-month season due to the demands of the school schedule. After completing the master's program, I hope to bring my experiences and educational background to an organization that manages natural resources in effective and innovative ways."



Melissa Tenneson and her Dad Mel (FBX-86) (Courtesy M. Tenneson)

Melissa Tenneson

Melissa is the daughter of long time Alaska and Boise Smokejumper **Mel Tenneson** (FBX-86). She graduated from BYU in April 2013, with a degree in Human Development with a 3.42 GPA, and will enroll in the University of Idaho this fall with the goal of entering their nursing program.

In her application Melissa says, "I am already an active participant in the nursing field and in my community. I am employed as a Certified Nursing Assistant (CNA) at an assisted living facility in American Fork, Utah, where I take care of the daily needs of the residents.

I further my work in the nursing field by volunteering with Encompass Hospice Home and Health, where I visit patients and keep them company. I serve my community by being a very active member in my church and filling different leadership roles in it, currently as co-chair of a meal-making committee. I furthered my community service this last semester by assisting a professor with his compilation of research and information for a book he was co-authoring.

"I currently work 16 hours a week (not counting my volunteering), while still maintaining 16 credits, which are the maximum work hours I can work in order to maintain my good academic standing. I plan to continue to work 16 hours in the upcoming year while maintaining at least a 14-credit load at University of Utah in 2013." 📖

Congratulations to Ian, Chris and Melissa. The NSA is glad to play a part in helping all of you further your educational goals. All of us, as NSA members and readers, should remember our scholarship program and Good Samaritan Funds when it comes time to support worthy causes with a donation. (Ed.)



George Gowan (MSO-54) congratulates NSA Scholarship winner Ian Dooley (FBX-08). Ian is probably the only jumper to attend Brooklyn Law School and George is probably the only jumper to graduate from Virginia Law School. (Courtesy George Gowan)

A Visit With Chris Wennogle, NSA 2013 Scholarship Award Winner

by Major L. Boddicker (Missoula '63)

Gary Baker (MSO-67), NSA coordinator for the NSA Scholarship Fund, approached me at the 2013 convention for Missoula jumpers in July about presenting the NSA award to **Chris Wennogle** (FBX-07). Since I enjoy meeting and visiting with any smokejumper, I immediately accepted.

The presentation was held during Smokejumper Day at Johnson's Corner, the world-renowned café and truck stop along Interstate 25 at Johnstown, Colo.

Stan Linnertz (MSO-61) has established a great relationship with Johnson's Corner, which generously sponsors the NSA trail improvement projects.

Chris received the NSA scholarship among roughly 20 old jumpers and Johnson's Corner staff. Accolades were extended all around.

Chris agreed to an interview with me about his background, his smokejumper experiences and his future plans.

MB: Hi, Chris. Thanks for giving the NSA your time, and congratulations on your NSA scholarship.

Chris: I appreciate the scholarship and chance to meet the NSA jumpers.

MB: Fill us in a bit on your background, Chris.

Chris: I grew up in rural New Jersey, then majored in geography at Kutztown University of Pennsylvania. Currently, I am studying for a master's degree of Natural Resources Stewardship at Colorado State University. I am 33 years old, married to a veterinarian, Sara, who is working at CSU's veterinarian hospital.

MB: Where and when did you train?

Chris: I was given the opportunity to train in Fairbanks, Alaska, in 2007. To date, I have had 60 fire jumps and a total of 125 jumps. I've jumped from every base but North Cascades, McCall and Redmond.

MB: What kind of fire work did you do before jumping?

Chris: I started with the NPS as a biologist. I became interested in fire when a former Alaska smokejumper, **Allen Biller** (FBX-82), taught a class called "Introduction to Wildland Fire" in Shenandoah, Va., which I attended. From there I worked on the Truckee hand crew, the



Chris Wennogle (FBX-07) receives NSA Scholarship check from Major Boddicker (MSO-63). (Courtesy M. Boddicker)

Flathead Hotshots, and have had seven glorious seasons jumping out of Alaska.

MB: What type of planes are you jumping from in Alaska now? We jumped DC-3s, Grumman Gooses, Lockheeds, and World War II planes when I was there in 1968-69.

Chris: We jump mainly out of Casa 212s, Doriers, Sherpas and Twin Otters. I believe the old World War II-era planes have been totally phased out.

MB: When and where was your favorite jump?

Chris: At the end of the fire season in 2007, I jumped a 2,000-acre fire on the banks of the Chandalar River outside of Arctic Village at the base of the Brooks Range. There were only five jumpers left in Alaska for the fire. **Wally "The Wall" Humphries** (FBX-90) and three other jumpers and I manned the fire. Fortunately, it rained and helped us put the fire out.

My favorite jump in the Lower 48 was in the Granite Chief Wilderness on the Tahoe National Forest. There was a large, rotten white fir burning, and all we had were pulaskis and a cross-cut saw. It was a working-man's two-manner on the forest where I

started my firefighting career.

MB: What was your worst fire?

Chris: Also in California. I jumped a fire on the San Bernardino with chaparral that was 10 feet tall. It took us 1½ shifts to cut a trail to the fire from the jump spot we selected. Luckily, two forest service guys jumped the heel of the fire and put it out for us. Lucky for them, they now had a trail on which to hike out.

MB: Amen to California fires. What do you plan to do for a profession?

Chris: Stay with the BLM firefighting program and jump as long as possible. When the jumping comes to an end, take a natural-resources job.

MB: How will the NSA scholarship help you?

Chris: Education is so expensive now, the scholarship will help us tremendously to pay for tuition and school costs, and to keep my debt under control. Another benefit of the program is meeting NSA members who sponsor the scholarship. Nice to realize the experienced old hands have an interest in us young jumpers.

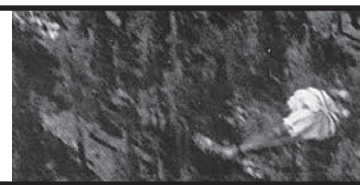
MB: Any final comments for the NSA?

Chris: Thanks for everything, NSA!

As I expected, Chris Wennogle is a mature, talented, and exceptional young man, like almost every jumper I have ever met. I vote for renewing his scholarship in 2014. 📌



THE JUMP LIST



The Jump List is intended to bring you up-to-date on your fellow NSA members. Send your information to Chuck Shelley; see his contact information on page 3 of this magazine.

Sara Brown (Redmond '03)

Now living in: Las Vegas, N.M.

Jumped: RAC 03, WYS 04-07

Since jumping: Graduated from the University of Wyoming with a doctorate in Ecology, with a focus on fire ecology, May 2011; took a job as an assistant professor at New Mexico Highlands University in Las Vegas, N.M., in August 2011; teaching the wildland fire concentration classes and mentoring four graduate students who are doing fire science-related projects; our research is currently trying to understand post-fire effects from the Las Conchas Fire, and investigating fire history in the Las Vegas, N.M., area.

Milt Beer (Redding '65)

Now living in: Meadow Valley, Calif.

Jumped: RDD 65

Since jumping: Drove senior citizens, local transit, school and fire buses until about eight years ago "when my wife got tired of me being gone so long in summer."

Milt says: "I build strip canoes and sea kayaks, carve duck decoys (for which I've won first prize in Chesapeake Bay contests), make miniature decoys from golf club heads, build and repair violins (but I can't play one), fix my cars and trucks, fish (with a lifetime license), and just about anything else that comes to mind. I also

repair items for local widowers for no charge, like welding cracks in wood stoves (in their living rooms) and eradicating bees (using a secret method). I am known as a jack-of-all-trades and a master of none, and will attempt to make pieces and parts no longer available if it is possible to do so. I have also written a sort of book for my family members about my many experiences with the U.S. Forest Service, which many folks think I should publish. It is now going to be updated to include many more stories, such as bus driving tales and other times outside government employment. I've also built miniature old-ship models from scratch (not kits), including the first America's Cup racer *America*. My home is like a mini-museum and includes a strip canoe hanging from the living room ceiling."

Scott Koertje (RAC-76)

After Smokejumping I became a police officer in Redmond. I had a long and successful career there and went up the ladder. Great town to be a cop in for sure. Wound up becoming the Chief of Police in North Plains, a small town in the Portland metro area, near Beaverton. Once you do make that rank, you become the target of recruiting firms offering employment for other organizations they have been hired by. I turned down those offers with regularity until...

I was offered to go in 2004 to the country of Jordan to begin training Iraqi police officers. I took an early retirement from the State of Oregon and my wife and I moved to Amman and helped build what became the

largest police-training center in the world, staffed by 21 different nations. We trained nearly 80,000 Iraqi police officers there.

In 2007 I was transferred to Iraq. I served as a mentor to the senior police Generals in the Ministry of Interior. This location is near Sadr City, and is not green zone stuff. This was during the surge in which the army cleared Baghdad again, and the 11 of us Americans in the building convoyed every day through some pretty contentious stuff. A few of the Iraqi friends I had made in Jordan made sure I stayed out of trouble in Iraq. I will be forever grateful to them for making sure I got out of there in one piece.

In 2008 I was asked to go to Pakistan to help develop their police forces and I have been here ever since. Contrary to popular belief Pakistan is a country of incredible rugged beauty mixed with the Punjab of the old British Empire and has some of the most friendly and giving people on earth. I work out of the Embassy in Islamabad, but have had the chance to travel nearly the entire country professionally. Not really a country set up for tourist activities tho....

Along the way I converted from contractor status, and became a full time Federal employee again. Sometimes I have to kick myself...working for the big government again. I am the Program Manager here for the Department of Justice, Criminal Division, International Criminal Investigative Training Assistance Program (ICITAP for short).

I am a recognized attaché of the Embassy and enjoy full diplomatic status and immunity. I am also a GS-15, and serve in an exempted non-competitive position in which the jobholders are recruited and selected, instead of going through the entire civil service selection process. Again I shake my head. I started in the Forest Service in Bly, Oregon, at the age of 16 fighting wildfires as a GS-1, Step 1. It amazes me that I have gone from bottom to top in the government, with another career thrown in between somewhere."

We concentrate on police organizational development and our efforts are focused at the highest levels of police ranks. We have been successful, but it has not been without challenges. These people were handed the British Colonial system in 1861 after the Indian Mutiny of 1857 and have been stuck with it ever since. Change is slow and sometimes Congress is not happy with that. However, I constantly remind people that even at the start of my career, police in the US were regarded as brutal, inefficient, and corrupt. It took us 30 years to change. How can we expect a much older society to change in 6 months? It is an incredibly complicated country with all kinds of religious (Muslim), tribal, environmental and political problems. But...they are good people who love Americans once they meet us. Needless to say I have made some great and long lasting friends here.

Like everyone else I read about in the NSA magazine (that my wife always forwards to me), my life was forever changed by the ethics that were pounded into me during



McCall Base Reunion June 2013. 1984 McCall Ned Class: L-R: Larry Wilson, Jim Duzak, Scott Anderson, Tim Farrell. (Courtesy J. Duzak)

rookie training and during my Smokejumping days. We don't give up, we never die, and we never compromise our individual ethics. And we do it with a very quiet style and pride that nobody else really ever needs to know about. It is deeply and firmly rooted inside us and we know...that is enough. We walk every day with a very quiet confidence and it shows through and affects our post-smokejumper days. 🍄



NSA 2013 Vietnam Trip. Mimi and Garry Peters (CJ-63) at Chinese Border near Sapa, Vietnam. (Courtesy J. Fritz)



NSA 2013 Vietnam trip. Valerie and Jim Fritz (CJ-59) at Chinese border near Sapa, Vietnam. (Courtesy J. Fritz)

New NSA Life Members since January 2013

Thanks for your support!

#	Name	Base	Year
272	SNAPP, JIM	MISSOULA	1965
273	SITTNER, FRED	REDMOND	1976
274	COURTNEY, ED	MISSOULA	1958
275	ANDERSON, LARRY	MISSOULA	1954
276	HALLIGAN, RICH	IDAHO CITY	1976
277	CULBERTSON, JOHN	FAIRBANKS	1969
278	BRESLIN, DENIS	N CASCADES	1969
279	LORD, JOE	MISSOULA	1956
280	ROMNESS, GARY	MISSOULA	1962
281	BRADLEY, WATSON	MISSOULA	1974
282	WHIPPLE, MORGAN	MISSOULA	1989
283	ATWOOD, DAVE	REDDING	1967
284	MCKEAN, ROBERT	MISSOULA	1967
285	BRONDUM, MARK	MCCALL	1981
286	WEISGERBER, BERNIE	REDDING	1960
287	BELL, DONALD H.	IDAHO CITY	1969
288	ROHRBACH, JOHN C.	MISSOULA	1967
289	DAYTON, DAVID L.	MISSOULA	1969
290	CRAMER, BILL	NIFC	1990
291	PACKARD, JOHN	REDMOND	1965

Letter From NSA President Jim Cherry (MSO-57) TO TRAIL PROGRAM PARTICIPANTS

I AM DELIGHTED to report that at the recent NSA Board of Directors meeting, the NSA Trails Team has chosen to make a significant contribution to the NSA Art Jukkala-Jon McBride Scholarship Fund and the NSA Good Samaritan Fund.

The Trails Team has voted to contribute \$10,000 to the Jukkala/McBride scholarship fund and \$6,000 to the Good Samaritan Fund with the commitment to contribute \$6,000 to the scholarship fund for each of two more years, financial considerations permitting.

It must be noted that these contributions are the result of the accumulated reimbursements

from the U.S. Forest Service, wilderness foundations, and other entities that support the Trails Program by funding for not only food but also mileage, without which, for the latter, this donation would not have been possible.

I would be remiss to not also mention the several hundred volunteers, who made this possible through these past 15 years, who have voluntarily given up taking any mileage costs in transporting the legions of personnel and gear to the many project sites. By doing so and foregoing any remuneration for travel, they thus have ensured an income stream for the Trails Program that has

permitted these funds to accumulate through the length of the program.

Their generosity and selfless participation are greatly appreciated and has been the linchpin to the many successes realized through the years.

The NSA Board of Directors is grateful for the Trails Program, the committee that works tirelessly to ensure its success, and their professionalism for so responsibly shepherding those assets through the life of the program. Their efforts, along with the hundreds of you who have participated in the NSA Trails Program, are noted and sincerely appreciated.

Thank you. 🍷



Jumpers visit Mann Gulch to plan potential trail project. L-R: Jim Thompson (MSO-63), Rich Nehr (RAC-70), Jim Phillips (MSO-67), Gary Johnson (FBX-74), Mike Overby (MSO-67). (Courtesy J. Phillips)

The Return Of Ford Trimotor NC8419

by Ray Williams (Associate)

It all started at the Moose Creek Ranger Station in Idaho on Aug. 4, 1959. The Ford Trimotor NC8419 came from Grangeville, Idaho, with smokejumpers on board en route to a fire. It was to stop at Moose Creek to drop supplies and continue to the fire. But on the grass airstrip, it caught a tail wind as it ran out of runway and ground-looped into trees where it caught fire.

Pilot Bob Culver escaped through the top hatch, saving his life. **Gary Williams** (MSO-59) and **John Rolf** (MSO-57) burned to death, Gary almost immediately and John later that day. Nez Perce National Forest Supervisor Alva Blackerby died later from complications of the crash. **Ron Stoleson** (MSO-56) was injured but survived.

My brother Gary, 23 years old, was an Army veteran, graduate of the one-year New York State Ranger School, and had completed one year of forestry school in Montana. John was a Navy veteran and student at the Oneonta State College in New York.

In the summer of 2001 another brother, a nephew, and I, along with our wives, made a trip to Missoula and on to Moose Creek. Stoleson had arranged flights to Moose Creek and acted as our guide. We saw the plaque in memory of the three who lost their lives.

I later came in contact with **Fred Donner** (MSO-59), a friend of both Gary and John, all three upstate New Yorkers, and he told me that some parts of NC8419 were being used in a rebuild project. Notably, using the original data plate would enable the rebuild to carry the original number.

Over the years that NC8419 was being rebuilt, Mabel and I stopped twice in Kalamazoo, Mich., to see its progress. However it may sound to you, high on my bucket list was to fly in NC8419 when it once again took to the air.

Fred told us in July 2013 that two Ford Trimotors were barnstorming the country. He said the finally-completed NC8419 would be at its home base, Kalamazoo Air Zoo, July 18-21 on exhibition and giving rides. Mabel and I decided it was now or never and drove from southwestern New York to Kalamazoo.

We arrived around noon July 18 and went to the ticket room and waited to fly. We took off at 4 p.m. for an uneventful flight. Pilots Cody Welch and Rich DesJardins were very friendly and knowledgeable. All of the Air Zoo people were outgoing and helped to

make our trip memorable.

We went back to tour the museum the next day and ended up back in the flight room visiting with pilots and Air Zoo volunteers. The pilots were waiting for three more passengers to fill the plane. A phone call said they wouldn't be there until the next day. So they asked us if we would like a complimentary flight. Naturally, we said yes, and so I did my bucket list item twice. Can you top that?

We would like to thank Fred Donner for his help and encouragement for over a decade that made all this possible. 📌

Postscript by Fred Donner

Ray's story started for me on Saturday, Aug. 1, 1959. It was just getting dark when **Ray Schenck** (MSO-56) and I jumped a two-jumper fire in upper Kelly Creek on the Clearwater National Forest.

We cut down a snag wrapped in flames, a real adventure on a pitch-black night, and spent Sunday mopping it up. Our instructions were to be picked up by a helicopter above the top of Kelly Creek on the Bitterroot Divide. It took most of Monday to pack uphill cross-country.

After reaching the top and examining our map and instructions, we realized we were nowhere near the proposed pick-up point, that we were mislocated six miles north by one township, and no helicopter was going to look for us where we were. So we decided we'd best get ourselves headed south.

We barber-poled a tree with orange streamers, stacked our gear by it, and left for the South Pole. We spent Monday night wrapped together in a plastic sheet trying to keep warm, Ray in Idaho, me in Montana, we thought. We were still hoofing it south late Tuesday when we heard the *whomp whomp* of a helicopter.

The pilot was as happy to see us as we were to see him because there was growing concern about where we were, somebody having recognized there was a problem. Then the bombshell exploded, "Bad news, guys. Ford crash at Moose Creek today and Williams and Rolf are dead."

Not a word was said as we flew north and

picked up the gear and then went to Kelly Creek Ranger Station.

I knew Gary and John quite well. Over the weekend of July 4, 1959, two other jumpers and I had driven to West Yellowstone with Gary so he could see his fiancée while we toured the town. Over the previous winter, I had visited John where he was a student in Oneonta, N.Y. while I was home in New York. (I knew John from 1958 when I rookied the first time and broke my leg on a practice jump.)

After my life member biography appeared in the April 2003 *Smokey jumper*, I got a phone call from Ray wondering if I had known Gary. An emotional conversation began a long friendship.

Ray and Mabel later visited us in Falls Church, Va., where he told me he wanted to ride in NC8419. Then I read the article by **Roland Pera** (MSO-56) "Tragedy at Moose Creek" in the January 2006 *Smokey jumper*. I had not known that Roland and **Bob Reid** (MSO-57) had wit-

nessed the crash and tended to the injured, Bob helping Gary.

I asked Bob if he would talk to Ray and Mabel. He said of course he would, so I introduced them and they later met in Florida; Bob gave Ray a souvenir from NC8419.

While at our second home in Minnesota in June 2013, I drove by the Brainerd Airport and saw a sign that said there would be a Ford Trimotor in town over the July 4 weekend giving rides.

I went to see it. It was the Experimental Aircraft Association (EAA) Ford from Oshkosh, Wis., NC8407. It was a smokejumper plane in the late 1950s, so I am certain I jumped it and also NC8419, as would have any Missoula jumper of the same era.

One of the Ford pilots I talked to said, "One of you guys shows up at almost every stop!" And I learned that NC8419 would be flying in Kalamazoo in two weeks. You know the rest.

BLAST FROM THE PAST

Doctor Makes Daring Jump, Recommended For Award

by **Jack Demmons**
(Missoula '50)

The Daily Missoulian paper of July 12, 1944, had an article with the title "Training for jumpers bears fruit."

A medical officer trained as a parachute jumper with the squadron of doctors from the Second Air Force at Seeley Lake through the Forest Service parachute organization has been recommended for a special award after a distinguished jump in Colorado.

A bomber crashed on the Continental Divide in Colorado, with four of the 10 crew members killed,



and four left lying desperately hurt on a rocky ledge, with two able to make their way out.

Lieutenant Amos Little of the Medical Corps was the doctor sent as a jumper following his training in the Blackfoot country of Western Montana. He dropped a parachute load of medical supplies and food, then jumped himself, trusting that he would hit the ledge. He dropped into a tree, fell 20 feet, and scrambled uninjured to the men who had been hurt in the crash. He fed them, bandaged their wounds and gave them drugs to ease their pain until a rescue party reached the place.

Little was one of six doctors trained for parachute rescue jumping work here by the Forest Service for the Second Air Force. His home is at Marlboro, Massachusetts. He was a graduate of Dartmouth in 1939.

(After World War II, Amos Little moved to Helena, Montana. He died there June 20, 2010, after a distinguished career as a doctor in that city. He also made rescue jumps during that time.) 🕒

Fall Fires in Alaska-We Were Flexible

by LeRoy Cook (Cave Junction '64)

One fall in the early 70s, I was the Fire Control Officer at Tanacross when **Al Dunton** (FBX-67) flew in. He had the last available jumpers (2-3) on board and a jump suit for me. I hadn't jumped for a year, but he still asked me to suit up. After a couple minutes thinking about it, away we went to a fire northeast of Anchorage. It was a windy SOB in the hardwoods high up. If **Ray Farinetti** (CJ-64) were alive, he'd verify this.

Another time, Roger Trimble was a Chief Dispatcher at Tanacross. He later went on to be the top dog at NIFC. We were the only ones left, I ordered a Ranger (helicopter) and we commuted to a small fire in the Alaska Range. This was his first experience on an actual

fire and I showed him the ropes—OJT.

Another time, my partner and I were on a river fire in the Brooks Range when some Indians came up the river by boat and started shooting over our heads. They were into the joy juice. We jumped behind the root wads from some of the fallen trees. After they came to the shore, I hired them on the spot (SF-44) to take us back out the next day. That seemed to calm them down.

Pat Shearer (MSO-67) and I were headed out to go sheep hunting when Dunton yelled out through the window that we had a fire. Another situation with everyone gone for the year.

I loved those fall fires; the fall colors and clean air are forever burned in my mind. We were a flexible bunch. 🔦

Smokejumper Rations And Accoutrements

by Karl Brauneis (Missoula '77)

I rookied at Missoula in 1977 but my first fire jump was in Alaska. The Missoula Jump Base had recently converted to freeze-dried food to save weight on the aircraft.

In Alaska the men had an option, or so the story went: "Do you boys want to eat freeze-dried like the hippies and the down-south jumpers or stay with C-rations like John Wayne and the Fighting 6th Marines?"

Of course the Alaska jumpers stayed with the C-rations and we loved 'em for it. Good old C-rats with the P-38 and the cigarettes.

I was able to get two jump details to Alaska in '77 and '79. After a jump with **Dave Dunn** (FBX-74) in '77, I decided to bring my own revolver on any future booster crews. This was, in part, due to the Dave Dunn fire where we counted 12 different bears around us, and I had the experience of crawling through bear tunnels to get from our camp to the fire.

Later, my older brother bought me a Ruger .357 Police Service Six stainless-steel revolver – the perfect jump gun. I still use the revolver today "cowboying" in the Wind Rivers and have drawn it several times on bear and moose. Fortunately, I have never had to squeeze the trigger except in practice.

Somewhere along the line, we started singing a song

to the tune of "Give Me the Simple Life." We made up verses as we went along. I am thinking that **Jimmy Lee** (MSO-77), **Wayne Williams** (MSO-77) and **Bruce Anderson** (MSO-77) all had a part in the song.

My memory is a bit faded but some of the verses went something like this, and I added, of course, with relish. I am sure the young jumpers of today can come up with even more creative additions.

*C-rats are good – freeze-dried is bad
Those Beenie-Weenies sure hit the spot
So hop in the Doug – load up the grub
Give me the smokejumper life
Chicken tetrazzini – well, it ain't such a biggie
And dried prunes just don't hit the spot
So load the C-rations – it's time for action
Give me the smokejumper life
A good deal is all I am after – two-manner in wild
Alaska
Bob Marshall is calling – there's no use in stalling
Crank up the Travelair
Ohhhhhhhhhhh
Marlboro filters and Camel straights
Copenhagen – Red Man chew
.357 or .44 magnum
Give me the smokejumper life 🔦*

Ye Olde OXE– 130 Years In Missoula

by Fred Donner (Missoula '59)

The Oxford Saloon and Café, widely known as the OX, at 337 North Higgins Avenue, on the corner of East Pine Street, is a long-standing favorite oasis of Missoula smokejumpers. [See **Chuck Pickard** (MSO-48) and **Bill Fogarty** (MSO-57) in the April 2006 *Smokejumper*.]

The OX is mentioned several times and even pictured in the recently published biography of **Jerry Daniels** (MSO-58), *Hog's Exit: Jerry Daniels, the Hmong, and the CIA* by Gayle Morrison. During Jerry's three-day Hmong funeral in Missoula in 1982, the OX got a lot of smokejumper business. During my two years on the smokejumper crew, I ate at the OX almost every time I was in town. (I was headed to the OX on my 22nd birthday when I was alerted for my first fire jump.)

I've been an OX devotee for 58 years, probably no record but certainly a good average. In my first season in the U.S. Forest Service, 1955, I traveled western Montana on spruce budworm damage surveys. When

that ended I was a "choker setter" for Anaconda Logging at Seeley Lake.

Whenever in Missoula, I usually ate at the OX at least once a day. I worked that winter at the Anaconda Sawmill in Bonner while living in a rooming house one block from the OX and eating at least one meal a day there all week.

The price, quality, and quantity could not be beaten. While back in Missoula visiting in 1965, 1992, 1995, 2004, 2005, 2006, and most recently at the 2013 Missoula smokejumper reunion, I always had at least one OX meal. Nothing has changed at the OX – still the best and most food at the best price: a smokejumper's dream, cheap-skates as most of us are.

Other smokejumpers can

attest to the bar and the gambling for which the OX is famous. I was there strictly for the grub.

On my most recent visit, I talked to a friendly bartender and cook named Clinton who was a wealth of information, adding to my memories. Clinton told me



Fred Donner at the Ox (Courtesy F. Donner)

a book had been written about the OX, but no copy could be found.

Although some people debate about when and where the OX started, it was located in 1883 on the southwest corner of Higgins and Broadway. The origin of the name is unknown.

It moved one block north to its present location in June 1955. Unverified folklore has it being the longest bar in Montana. There is a general belief that it has been open 24 hours a day, 365 days a year for 130 years, which may or may not be strictly so. But if there are keys to the doors, no one knows where they are.

To maintain the record, when the bar moved in 1955, customers left their drinks on the bar top that were then picked up and carried one block north and set in place. Customers followed and went back to their unspilled glasses.

While basically a working man's place, the OX has had its share of notable visitors over the years from all levels of society. Travel guides and tourist books frequently mention it.

Most famously, the OX was the often *de facto* campaign headquarters for the esteemed Sen. Mike Mansfield (D-Mont.) as he made his way from the Butte copper mines to university professor to the Congress and Senate to ambassador to Japan. He tapped the grassroots – or more accurately, the bar stools – for local political views when he would stop in.

Time magazine published an article on the Old West in its Aug. 7, 1989, edition. Considering the number of old-timer bars throughout the western United States, the OX was the only saloon presented.

At the OX, food doesn't come on round dinner plates. It comes on oval platters, often overflowing at the edges. No such things as quarter-pound or third-pound hamburgers. Currently a half-pound burger is \$4.25 and a one-pound burger is \$6.75. A one-pound rib eye steak is \$14.25. Does your local watering hole match those prices?

The OX has offered six-ounce chicken-fried steaks as breakfast or dinner entrees, currently \$8 either way, since 1986. The chicken-fried meals come with your choice of "JJ's sauce" or brown gravy.

If you're tough enough, try "JJ's sauce." I have no idea what's in it or where it came from or what "JJ's" means, but I had it and it will clear your sinuses or cure your hangover for certain. For many years "brains and eggs" was the most famous meal at the OX, not necessarily the most ordered. I tried same in 1955 just to say I had done so and did so again in 2005. (It had not improved.)

I would wait another 50 years for my third try, but Clinton told me that mad-cow disease ended brains

and eggs at the OX a few years ago.

Clinton told me the city health department has only good things to say about their sanitation. He also told me that back in the 1950s and 60s, if good food was left over at any time, rather than throw it away it was placed in a clean container by the back door all tossed together, regardless of what it was. Anyone could help himself or herself, gratis.

With the railroad depot nearby, railroad employees and those riding the rails were frequent visitors to same. I could have saved myself a lot of money doing that, especially coming home at 3 a.m. from night shift at the Bonner sawmill, if I had paid more attention to my surroundings. OX employees have always been known to feed truly desperate, hungry people.

I played the Good Samaritan a few times myself, taking a bum off the streets and feeding him at the OX, and had one or two crying in gratitude because I bought them food instead of alcohol. I will still happily feed a street person, but I will not give him or her money under any circumstances.

And last, but not least, is the ambiance at the OX, a veritable museum and art gallery. Mounted animal heads – notably a buffalo – greet you as you walk in as well as the poker table, the slots, and the jukebox. In front of the bar are a dozen or more rifles on display, some of them very unusual collectibles, that were acquired when the OX bought out a pawnshop next door. Twenty classic large photos of "The Mansfield Collection" illustrating many aspects of historical Missoula and Montana adorn the walls.

As for that book on the OX, during my last evening in Missoula my rookie roommate **Jack Benton** (MSO-59), **Barry Reed** (MSO-60), and Stan Cohen and their wives invited me to dinner. Jack, Barry, and Stan are fraternity brothers. Stan publishes pictorial history books – more than 80 so far, mainly on aviation and military subjects – and is the founder of the Museum of Mountain Flying in Missoula.

When I told Stan I was writing about the OX, he told me he was the publisher and he had one copy left! I just returned it to him by registered mail, not wanting to be the person who lost this treasure.

Google "Missoula" and "Oxford" and you will find their colorful website, including their current menu, as well as many reviews commenting on the food and the OX atmosphere ranging from best to worst. Not everyone views the OX in the same light that I do, but there is general agreement that the food is good, plentiful, and cheap.

What else could a smokejumper ask for, other than a two-jumper fire at 5 o'clock on Friday afternoon with a weekend of overtime in mind? 🍷