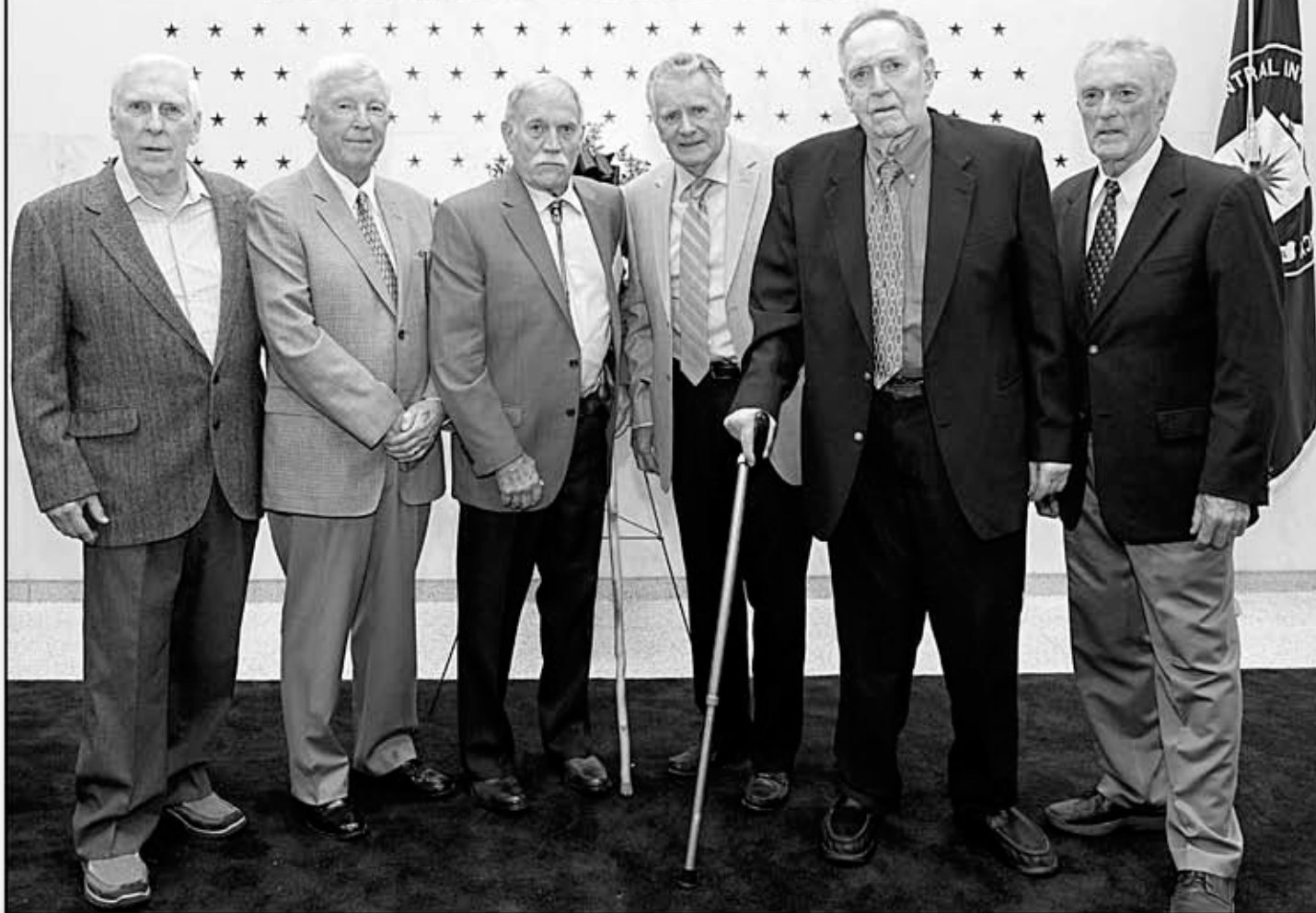


SMOKEJUMPER

IN HONOR OF THOSE MEMBERS
OF THE CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY
WHO GAVE THEIR LIVES IN THE SERVICE OF THEIR COUNTRY



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Message from the President



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

IN JULY THE NSA Board of Directors lost a friend and colleague when **Terry Egan** (CJ-65) lost his nine-month battle with lung cancer. Terry was an educator, having earned his PhD in Education from Seattle University. As a member of the NSA Board, Terry headed up the Scholarship Committee and developed the matrix used for scoring the scholarship applications. You can read more of Terry's background in the "Off the List" section of this issue of *Smokejumper*.

This year the NSA has been able to award a total of six scholarships. A total of 19 applications were received and the competition was stiff. All the applicants are to be commended for their academic excellence, their personal qualities, their essays, and their stated goals that have brought them to this point in their lives.

We introduce the scholarship winners to you. **See page 24 for their photos:**

Amy Duning (BOI-07) is a member of the NSA and jumped 2007-2011. She is enrolled at Boise State University and on the journey toward a nursing degree. As part of her essay Amy wrote the following: "I feel that smokejumping, fighting fire, parenting and eventually nursing will all be interconnected for myself. Being adaptable, making decisions with confidence, maintaining priorities, finding peace in chaos while continually preserving humor. These careers are dirty, demanding and exhausting. I wouldn't have it any other way, this is my path. Tenacity, execution, attention to detail, and the ability to maintain composure are all lessons I have learned through smokejumping. These are all traits that will be essential in nursing."

Jacob Watson is an associate member of the NSA and the grandson of a former jumper. Jacob is moving into his senior year at the University of Minnesota where he is majoring in Economics with a concentration in Business Management. He wrote the following in his essay: "My strong work ethic, discipline, and attention to detail has allowed me to overcome many obstacles in my life. An example of someone who had strong ambition to achieve their goals is Donald E. Maypole, Ph.D. (IDC-54); I draw a parallel between his

work ethic and my own. He also worked in various countries all over the world, helping those countries establish mental health systems. I am entering the financial industry with the long-term goal of maintaining strong ethical values to help people make smarter financial decisions for the betterment of their own and our country's future. I am applying for this scholarship because I have chosen to not take out any student loans. It has been a struggle working full-time outside of the classroom to make my tuition payments, but with a little hard work and dedication I have been successful thus far. This scholarship would help me tremendously as I enter my senior year by giving me more time to focus on my studies."

Annelise Nerison is the daughter of a former jumper who wrote: "I am a daughter of a smokejumper. Through my father and throughout my 24 years of life, I have had the privilege of being

a leader and experiencing strong leadership. My father taught me life lessons on strength in numbers, the value of good work ethic, and to fear nothing. In college, I learned how to work with others, problem solve, and to be more empathetic. These experiences have helped shape my abilities to be a strong, resilient leader... I will be starting full-time graduate school in August for an MSW (Masters of Social Work). I intend to use my degree to advocate for children with mental illnesses, find creative solutions for populations of people who are wildly misunderstood, and fight for social justice... For the last two years since I graduated with a Bachelor's Degree, I have been working three jobs and over 75 hours a week. One of my jobs is full time as a social worker but because social work does not pay well, I need two more incomes to live reasonably. When I start my MSW Program in August, I will be required to quit my jobs. Part of our MSW Program requires us to participate in a practicum experience. I will be interning for 900 hours without pay. This scholarship would allow me to take out a smaller loan and relieve some of the debt that higher education brings." Annelise will be attending the University of Montana in Missoula.

Darin Jones is an associate member of the NSA and the grandson of a former smokejumper. He is enrolled as a freshman at Virginia Commonwealth University in Richmond, VA. In his essay he wrote: "I intend using my degree to benefit the lives of others. I plan on getting a master's degree in law and a minor in mathematics. With this academic background, I hope to work for Homeland Security, or a similar Federal Agency working to ensure the safety of the residents of the United States... I worked at a local Subway restaurant 20 hours a week during my senior year in high school to help pay expenses... I plan to pay for college by working over the summer and applying for scholarships, grants, and loans. I realize preliminary attendance at a community college would be a less expensive option. However, I worked hard in high school and believe I can be successful entering directly into a four-year university."

Kortney Dietz is the granddaughter of a former jumper. She is enrolled at Washington State University, has been accepted into the School of Pharmacy and is working toward a Ph.D. degree.

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Smokejumper base abbreviations:

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

Kortney wrote the following in her essay: "Education provides opportunities for individuals to expand their minds and create better standards of living for themselves and their community I personally have set out to challenge myself and strive to reach my full potential throughout my life for this reason... I was raised to show respect to those who work and volunteer within their community. These philanthropic values were also fortified by growing up in the small, close-knit town of Ennis, Montana. Living in such a rural, small town, I became very aware of how contributing back to one's community will strengthen public ties and boost morale greatly... While I do work full time over summers and on breaks, I do not make nearly enough to cover the entirety of the costs associated with being a student. By awarding a scholarship to me, you would be helping to pay for an educational degree that is designed to help provide community members with the medications and guidance they need for everyday life."

Kerissa Sheley is the granddaughter of a former jumper. She is enrolled at the University of Oregon as a junior in the Lundquist College of Business and working toward a career in Marketing. Kerissa wrote in her essay: "In addition to taking part in organizations run by students on campus, I have been fortunate enough to serve as an ambassador for the university as a member of the Oregon Cheer Team this past year. I also have experience working for departments within the university, such as Athletic Marketing and Promotions and Student Orientation Services. These experiences have sparked my interest in focusing my career goals to the sports industry, and I hope to acquire more knowledge as I continue my work with the department. I am currently interning with the University Athletic Department's Marketing and Promotions offices for the baseball season and have made plans to continue on a part-time basis for next year working on a broader scale within the department." 🧠

Rescue Jump In The Kalmiopsis Wilderness-1948

by **Bob Nolan** (Cave Junction '47)

All people have days in their lives they will never forget. This is a day I'll never forget. **Cliff Marshall** (CJ-46), the smokejumper foreman, called for all the jumpers to assemble in front of the old parachute loft, down below the ranger station. He stood on the porch and addressed the jumpers. He asked for one volunteer to jump with him to rescue a woman who had been seriously injured when bucked off a horse on a steep mountain trail.

The horse and rider rolled over three times and down a rocky bank, according to another rider, breaking the rider's ankle and crushing her hip. Of course, we all volunteered. I was picked. Little did I realize what an adventure laid ahead!

While I was gathering up the parachutes and jumpsuits, Cliff assembled a cargo chute with first aid supplies, a stretcher, and other necessities. He

called the airport and told Don Moyer, the pilot, to warm up the airplane.

At this point, I tried to talk Cliff into taking more jumpers as they had all volunteered. He said "no" to this suggestion and insisted that the two of us could handle it. What a big mistake this turned out to be.

At this time, I had no idea where we were going or how far we had to carry the injured woman. I just assumed it must be a short distance, since Cliff had assured me that the two of us were all that were needed. Boy, was he ever wrong.

There were nine women in this group of riders. They called themselves the Rough and Ready Ramblers. Grandma Banta was the leader of the group. This was the sixth day of their venture into the wilderness. Grandma Banta's grandson, **Lou Banta** (CJ-51), became a smokejumper in later years.



Bob Nolan (NSA files)

Grandma Banta operated a pack string for a number of years, packing supplies into miners for winter. She was a pretty tough gal.

During the flight, Cliff showed me a map with a large "X" marking the spot where the injured woman was. The map showed a place called Hawks Rest. It was located on a mountain ridge dividing the Chetco and the Illinois River drainages.

On further study, I discovered we faced at least a 20-mile packout to the nearest road. I pointed this out to Cliff and suggested he have the pilot bring back at least four more jumpers. He refused.

I had been around Cliff long enough to know that he didn't like taking advice from anyone. Once he made a decision, no one could change his mind. But this was absolutely ridiculous, as we soon found out. Only the two of us to carry an injured person on a stretcher over 20-some miles in the wilderness – boy, was I mad at Cliff over this. But, there was nothing I could do about it.

We spotted the women and horses on top of the ridge at Hawks Rest. Cliff threw out a drift chute and found a really strong wind blowing in from the

coast. Because of this strong wind, he decided to drop the cargo chute at a much lower altitude than we would jump. He did a good job on spotting the cargo chute, as it landed right where the women were gathered.

The plane then gained altitude for our jump. Cliff did such a good job on the cargo drop that he didn't want to waste time. Not dropping another drift chute – big mistake!

I went first with Cliff following. The strong wind carried me over the top of the divide and down a really steep draw. The ground was so steep that I wasn't getting any closer to it. The farther down the draw, the taller the trees became. I turned my chute around and pulled down hard on the risers to slow my drift down the canyon, hoping I would hang up in one of the trees.

My chute finally hung up in a tall fir, well more than a mile below the ridge top. I got out my jump rope and made a letdown. We all used 100-foot let-down ropes at that time. When I got to the end of my rope, I was more than 20 feet above the ground. There was nothing but a pile of big boulders below me. There was no way I could drop 20 feet into those boulders.

Even if I only sprained my ankle, I would be of no use to Cliff in carrying the stretcher. I spotted a large, high patch of Manzanita on one side of the draw. I decided to see if I could get enough swing at the end of my rope to land in this brush pile.

With a hundred feet of jump rope and 30 feet of parachute, I could get a pretty good swing going. By pumping my legs and body, I finally got a really high swing going. I just hoped that the swing would not pull my chute from the tree. If it did, I would really be in trouble.

I finally got enough swing to reach the Manzanita. Now I had to time my release so I would land in the middle of the brush. On about the 10th swing I let go and landed perfectly in the middle of the brush.

The only problem was, I was embedded in the middle of the brush. I tried pushing with my feet, but I couldn't move my body. I was only bending the brush back with my feet. I decided I had to get turned over on my belly so I could pull with my hands along with pushing with my feet. It was a struggle getting turned over, as I was sunken from the impact of landing.

By using my hands to pull and my feet to push, I managed to get to the edge of the brush, but I could go no further. I had no more brush to pull on. My first thought was to call Cliff for help. Then I remembered I had a pair of tree climbers in my jumpsuit pocket. My hand could barely touch the ground, but by jabbing the climbers into the ground, lifting my body up and pulling forward on the climbers, I was able to make forward progress.

Once free of the brush, I took off my jumpsuit and placed it at the base of the tree I had hung up in. By now, Cliff was probably wondering what happened to me, but he made no attempt to come looking for me. I headed up the draw as fast as I could go, non-stop. Cliff was visibly upset. His greeting to me was, "Where have you been, Nolan? I've been here over an hour waiting for you."

When I tried to explain what happened, he didn't want to listen. All he said was, "Grab the stretcher and let's get going" – giving me no time to catch my breath. I suggested to Cliff that a couple of the women should come along with us to help out.

He said, "No, we don't want them!" The riding group then continued down the Chetco drainage.

The injured woman was Opal Hill, age 33, of Cave Junction. The women had been giving her whiskey to drink to ease the pain. Upon leaving, they gave her the rest of the fifth to take along.

The first leg of the trail was all downhill. When we reached Hawk Creek, we realized that we had no canteens to carry any water. Since the bottle of whiskey was nearly empty, we filled it with water. We later dropped it and broke the bottle, causing us to make the rest of the packout without water.

After a short rest, we started up the other side of the canyon. The trail was really steep and had many switchbacks. We carried her on the stretcher with her broken foot forward, as it didn't hurt as much with her foot elevated.

I had the back of the stretcher with her upper body and going up the steep trail, I was carrying 90 percent of the weight. The second time I told Cliff I had to stop and rest, he was upset and said he thought he picked the best man in camp, but sure made a mistake when he picked me.

That didn't sit too well with me, and I told Cliff I wanted to trade ends on the stretcher. It wasn't very long before he wanted to stop. The guy in the back had all the weight. From then on we traded ends.



Bob Nolan with Batwing Outfit (Courtesy Al Boucher)

Another problem was that we could not set the stretcher on the ground, as it caused great pain to Opal's crushed hip. The one in back had to hold up the stretcher while we rested. We could find a rock on which to place the back of the stretcher.

If we didn't have enough problems already, another one cropped up. Opal had to relieve herself a few times. This is where the women would have come in handy, but Cliff had said that we didn't need them. One of us had to hold her by the armpits while she pulled her pants down.

Just before sunset, we heard the airplane coming. I thought for sure that they came to drop more jumpers. To our disappointment, it just circled over us and flew away. We had no communication devices with us of any kind – not even streamers to lay out. We had no choice but to trudge on. At least we were on a flat ridge with no more hills to climb.

Then another problem showed up. It got dark on us and we had no flashlights. There was no moon that night and it was pitch dark. We lost the trail numerous times. One of us had to hold up the back end of the stretcher while the other tried to find the trail.

One time while I was in front, I tripped and fell down and sprained my ankle. It wasn't too bad but

sure hurt walking with the stretcher. I suggested that we stop for the night and wait until daybreak. Cliff would have nothing to do with this, and he insisted that we go on.

My ankle was swelling up and hurting more. My balance wasn't too good, either. Finally, after a break, I informed Cliff I wasn't going another foot. We were off the trail more than on it, and we weren't making much headway. We still had many miles to go. He didn't like this one bit, but there wasn't much he could do about it.

About an hour later, we heard voices. We got up to look and saw a row of headlights coming our way. It was a ground party coming in to relieve us. Boy, was I ever glad to see them. When they reached us, we found out we were more than 50 feet off the trail.

When the airplane circled us earlier, they knew we were not going to make it out before nightfall. Luckily, a ground crew was organized.

There were nine men in the group, each with a flashlight and canteens of water we badly needed. Four men from the ranger district and smokejumpers **Chuck Foster** (CJ-47), **Lyle Hoffman** (CJ-47), **Richard Courson** (CJ-46), **Bill Green** (CJ-45), and **Herb Krissie** (CJ-46) made up the group.

With this number to carry the stretcher, they never had to stop for a break. I had a hard time keeping up with my sprained ankle.

The fresh crew carried the woman the last few miles to a Forest Service truck and, eventually, an ambulance transported her to the Grants Pass Hospital.

The assistant ranger, who led the ground party, figured Cliff and I carried the stretcher for 11 miles. Forest Service packer Hugh White and smokejumper **Terry Fieldhouse** (CJ-47) rode in to retrieve our parachutes and jump gear.

Bill Green and I were squadleaders under Cliff Marshall, the foreman. I had always done things Cliff's way without question before this episode. Now I figured I had earned enough experience and knowhow to start making constructive suggestions.

My first recommendation was to issue longer letdown ropes and preassembled cargo chutes with adequate rescue supplies – including water and lights – so we wouldn't have to scramble at the last minute and probably forget something in the rush. These and other constructive suggestions I made were ignored.

Fast forward to June 1950. Cliff called for all smokejumpers to assemble in front of the new loft building at the airport. Now what, another rescue jump? This new announcement changed my life forever!

Cliff informed us he wasn't going to allow any of us to make any more free-fall parachute jumps during the fire season. This was because he didn't want anyone to be injured and not available for fire jumps. I was the only one at the base with my own free-fall parachute, but other jumpers were using my parachute to make free-fall jumps on weekends.

This was totally okay with me. I could understand his concern. I told Cliff I had committed myself to jump at an air show in Ashland that coming weekend. After that, I would put my chute away. They were advertising this on the radio and in newspapers.

Cliff informed me that if I made the jumps, he would have to fire me. I told Cliff if that was the case, I quit right now. He was shocked at this and said I couldn't quit now – who would train the new jumpers? I told him that was his problem and walked off, went to the barracks, loaded my car and drove off.

On the way through town, I stopped at the local tavern to have a beer and figure out what I was going to do now. I sat at the bar contemplating what I had just done. I loved being a smokejumper and regretted quitting, but Cliff never left me much choice.

At about this time, a couple of loggers I knew walked in and sat by me. They wanted to know what I was doing in the middle of the afternoon. When I informed them I had quit, they couldn't believe it. They wanted to know what my plans were.

"Hell, I don't know," was the only answer I could come up with.

They had an idea. "Why don't you buy a logging truck and haul logs for us?" they asked. I said I knew absolutely nothing about hauling logs. They said no problem, they would teach me.

Since I had no other plans, I said, "Okay, I'll give it a try." The very next day, I was hauling my first load.

On that very first load, I soon found out why nobody in his right mind would have hauled their logs. They had to use a logging tractor to pull the truck up a very steep, long hill to their landing where the logs were. After loading the truck with

big fir logs, they said they would ride along with me to the sawmill. Down the hill we went in low gear.

The motor was really winding up and I was pushing hard on the truck brakes, but it didn't slow the truck much.

One of the loggers said to pull on the trailer brakes. I didn't know where the trailer brakes were. The truck of logs was starting to jackknife. One of the loggers grabbed the lever on the steering column and pulled it down. They both jumped out of the truck, afraid it might jackknife.

The trailer brakes brought the truck under control, and I made it to the bottom. The only problem was the trailer tires were completely flat. To properly use trailer brakes, you're supposed to pull down and let off at intervals so the tires aren't sliding on one spot all the way down the hill. So much for my logger friends teaching me how to drive a truck. This

and other facets of logging I learned the hard way.

I took to logging like a duck takes to water. In a few years, I had a going logging operation with tractors and yarders. I finally found my true calling. There wasn't a day I hated to go to work. Every day was a different adventure. I logged for more than 40 years and still looked forward to each day of work.

I married a local high school girl. We have two children, five grandchildren, and 10 great-grandchildren. What more could a man ask for? 🧠

Besides winning a National Free-fall Championship, Bob went on to establish the Nolan Logging Company in Cave Junction, Oregon. It was said that Cliff Marshall was one of the few Airborne troops that had three combat jumps during WWII. Cliff started at Cave Junction in 1946 and was there through the 1953 season.

A Letter From “The Bear”

by Charley Moseley (Cave Junction '62)

Nineteen sixty was a tumultuous year for me. It began in frustration as my attempt to “walk on” to Coach Paul “Bear” Bryant’s University of Alabama football team had met a harsh death, and my bad decision to let a guidance counselor load me up with 18 semester hours of chemistry, calculus, physics and such brought disaster to my grade-point average.

The spring semester found me switched over to Business School, and out trying to become a walk-on member of our Track and Field Team. That turned out pretty good, and I was soon long jumping, high jumping, running the 100-yard dash, and participating as a member of both our 440-yard and mile relay teams.

By the end of the season, I thought that I had really done well in the Southeast Conference freshmen team in the 100. I was probably the best in the long jump, and right there with anybody in the high jump. I was really proud of myself and enjoying my position on the freshman team, until my name did not show up on the entry list Coach Drew posted for the SEC Championships at the University of Georgia.

That lack of recognition both embarrassed and angered me. How in hell was a man to make this goddamned team? I never asked and nobody ever volunteered to me how that happened. Much later, I surmised that it was a simple overlook, and not intended to slur my abilities and work ethic at all.

But, at that terrible moment, I had to tuck my tail feathers under and go home to Chatom, Ala., in some shame, and much frustration.

July 1 found me flipping hamburgers for minimum wages in Dallas and sleeping in one of those 4-foot-by-8-foot bedrooms, and so damned miserable I could barely stand it.

Moseley providence stepped in, and one hot day my landlady brought me a letter from the U.S. Forest Service in Gold Beach, Ore., offering me a job as an engineering aide if I could be there July 5 – four days away. No problem!

It took me about 10 minutes to quit my job, with no pay, pack a small bag, and hit the road west riding my good right thumb. Made it, too!

Oregon, we loved each other, and I still get down and kiss her ground every time I cross her state line

from any direction. The job and people fit me to a T. Strong, independent, but with a most enjoyable way of reaching out a helping hand if you needed one. Many of us newcomers did.

In thinking my Alabama days were pure history, I quickly began to send out letters to various schools of the Great Northwest in an effort to catch on with a football program needing an "All-American"-type running back or wide receiver. There never was any doubt in my mind that, if just given the chance, I could play with anybody in America. Getting the chance was the problem.

The big schools, like Alabama, Auburn, Oregon and Washington, did not really want to waste their space and time with walk-ons. I sent out letters and resumes to many of the smaller schools, especially to the University of Idaho. Somebody had spoken highly of them and their most beautiful alpine campus in Moscow.

By the time they responded to me and extended an invitation to visit, I had some six weeks of walking up and down the very steep Siskiyou mountains, pushing my body and legs to the zenith.

We were working 10 days on and four days off, so the bus trip over to Moscow was no problem, and the workout with an assistant coach and a lower-level quarterback went extremely well.

They had nobody on the team as fast as I was, nor with my ability to go and get a pass thrown anywhere near my hands. The quarterback kept mumbling to me under his breath: "Man, we are gonna want your ass here. Don't you worry about a thing."

After it was over they offered me a scholarship. "Write back to Alabama and have your grades transferred up here as soon as possible. You have a lot of work to do learning our plays."

Man, I was one happy puppy on the ride back to Gold Beach, and did immediately get a letter off to the records people in Alabama. They complied, but someone obviously also passed that along to track coach Red Drew, without my knowledge.

When I got back in from my next 10-day working stint, there was a letter and football scholarship offer from the University of Idaho. But, also a thick letter from the Athletic Department of the University of Alabama. I had never received any letter from anybody at the Athletic Department. Why now?

Finally, I slit open the large letter package, and "I be damned." It was a very nice and very personal

letter from the Bear himself, and signed: *Cordially, Paul W. Bryant, Athletic Director.* Holy be-Jesus!

He was offering me the Hugo Friedman full grant-in-aid track and field scholarship, beginning September 1960, and was really

looking forward to seeing me there on that date. Stunning! Tremendous! Unbelievable! Most exciting! How could this peon say "no" to the Bear?

Here I had been straining and pushing so hard to get just one scholarship of some kind, and lo and behold, I now had two only minutes apart. 1960 was really becoming my year.

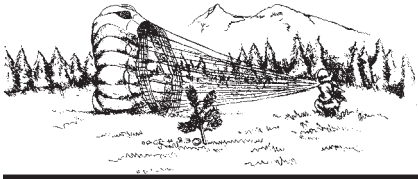
It took me a couple of days to weigh the possibilities, and future of me and my legs. With a little help and advice from my Oregon friends, like **John Manley** (CJ-62) and my boss Bob Walters, I decided to as Coach Bryant so eloquently said it: "Go home to Mama."

The trip home to the Capstone was a most happy journey for me, and the decision, I do believe, became the right one for me and "The Bear." We became very good friends. 🍷

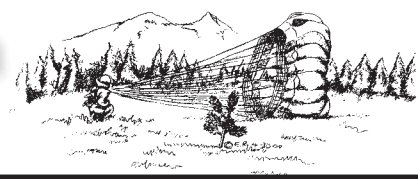
Alabama made a good choice in offering Charley an athletic scholarship. At one time he held the SEC records for the long jump, triple jump and high hurdles. He was the first Alabama athlete to score points in the NCAA Track & Field Championships with 4th places in the long jump and high hurdles. His long jump of 25-10 is still one of the best in Crimson Tide history. Charley graduated with degrees in business and law before heading off to continue smokejumping and a stint with Air America. (Ed.)



Charley Moseley (Courtesy John Moseley)



Snapshots from the Past



by Jeff R. Davis
(Missoula '57)

A Few Flying Stories

“**T**here I was at 10,000 feet without a parachute; nothin’ but a silk worm and a sewing needle. The air was so goddamned rough, even the automatic pilot bailed out...” Some of the most vivid memories of my smokejumping career are not “silk stories” at all, which imply parachute jumps. They’re episodes I encountered in the aircraft flying to and from wildfires.

The aircraft we flew in during the late 1950s and 60s were mostly of World War II vintage and not always maintained in the best condition. One example was “75 Charlie,” the modified AT-11 Twin Beech in which I made more flights than any other aircraft with the Forest Service.

As with all the planes we used in those days, 75 Charlie was not owned by the Forest

Service. They contracted it from its owner and chief pilot, Tuck Grimes, of Silver City, N.M.

Tuck was one of the best pilots I flew with, and 75 Charlie was a comfortable, trustworthy old friend most of the time. But due to less-than-meticulous maintenance, sometimes 75 Charlie gave me fits.

During one season, 75 Charlie had a “character defect” on the gauge of one of its two main fuel tanks; the needle hung up on two-tenths full. When the tank ran below two-tenths capacity, the needle stuck right at two-tenths and stayed there. I guess Tuck never got around to fixing it.

Worse, he never bothered to tell his partner, Thurman Yates, about the malfunctioning tank, either. Thurman alternated with Tuck in flying 75 Charlie, and they were both superb pilots. But when a tank runs dry on a smokejumper run, it can require more than excellent pilots to prevent a mishap.

I had a load of four jumpers one day in 75 Charlie, Thurman at the helm, destined for an eight-man fire on the Gila Forest out of Silver City. Another Twin Beech was ahead of me, going to the same fire with the other four jumpers.

When Thurman and I arrived over the fire, the first Beech-

craft had nearly finished its drop. As they made their final pass, the spotter called me on the airnet radio and said, “Jumper One” – 75 Charlie was designated Jumper One for Forest Service use – “this is Jumper Two. Would you take a low run down in there south-east of the spot where Rivera landed? He blew off the spot and I’m not sure if he’s OK.”

I said, “Sure,” and buzzed Ray Rivera (NCSB-61) several times until I was sure he was OK and then made my own drop. Between the Rivera passes and the cargo drops, I made five or six low level passes over that rough terrain, probably down to 30 or 40 feet at times.

If our engines had even sputtered once on those runs, we would have certainly crashed. The old AT-11 had a glide angle like a sewer lid, and it would not maintain level flight on a single engine. I thought nothing of it; this operation was typical of hundreds of others I’d made with the Forest Service.

We completed our drop and headed back to Grant County Airport. When we were about five miles out, the airport well in sight, the engines quit. We were running on the malfunctioning tank all this time – although Thurman, of course, wasn’t aware of the problem.

Although there was an auxiliary tank on an AT-11, and it was full, it's not always easy to switch tanks in midair. Twin Beeches are notorious for this problem. It got mighty quiet in that noisy old aircraft, but this wasn't the time to engage the pilot in conversation.

Thurm's hands were flying across the instrument panel like a pair of spiders on speed. I had no desire to bail out over the huge stacks of Kennecot's mining operation we were passing over, so I sat tight. Thurm switched over to the second tank, but the engines refused to fire.

He yelled, "Hang on! I'm gonna dump the gear!"

I knew we were flying much too fast to lower the landing gear, but the airport was fast approaching and I figured Thurm knew his stuff. The gear thumped down and the plane lurched some more. It had been lurching and weaving all over the sky since the engines quit, but now it felt like a lead sled. The stall warning horn shrieked in our ears.

"I can't make the tarmac. I'm going for the dirt diagonal!" Thurm yelled again. The dirt diagonal strip Thurm was aiming for was closer than the paved main runway, and we were running out of time.

We caromed down over the jumper base and the parked Forest Service aircraft. As we came over, half up on a wing and 20 feet in the air, we swooped right over Jumper Two and the spotter, **Tom Uphill** (MSO-56), who was walking back across the ramp.

We locked eyeballs, seemingly only a few feet apart.

I don't know to this day if our wobbling, twisting approach would have worked. But just before we hit the dirt, the engines caught, held and roared as Thurm poured the coals to them and went around for a normal landing on the main runway. I don't think Thurm and I said more than a few words to each other on our short hike to the jumper shack, other than maybe "shit happens." We had more fire calls waiting and business to attend to. 75 Charlie gave me fits by running out of gas in flight another time, but this time it was caused by a careless smokejumper.

I was spotting a four-man request up around Mogol-lon Baldy, in the Wilderness District on the west side of the forest. The country around Baldy is steep and craggy and lies at the highest elevation on the Gila; Baldy crests at 10,500 feet above sea level. The fire was reported to be down below the ridge tops, lying mid-slope in one of the precipitous drainages between Sacaton Mountain and Mogol-lon Baldy. We couldn't find the smoke; so as usual, I told Tuck to take 'er down for a closer look.

Earlier when we'd loaded up for the fire, I'd let one of the jumpers ride underneath the flight deck in the Plexiglas nose bubble. Normally, the jumpers sat packed together on the deck – no seats. It was against the rules to allow one to sit in the nose bubble, but I let the

guy sweet-talk me into it.

As we roared down into the drainage, heavily overloaded as always, the engines suddenly quit. We were at about 800 feet. The jumper sitting in the nose bubble had inadvertently shut off the main fuel control valve, although we didn't know that until later.

Tuck's hands were doing the imitation-spider thing again on the control panel. I twisted around in my position in the right bucket seat, staring at the jumper sitting in the door: **Dick Tracy** (MSO-53), the foreman of our crew, and first up to jump. He knew as well as I did we didn't have much time.

He held up the anchor snap on his static line, asking me without words if he should bail out. I hesitated; we were over rough terrain, not at all suitable for an intentional jump. I weighed the risks for another brief instant, then started to raise my hand to signal him out the door, when the engines fired back up and held.

We roared back out of that canyon, balls to the wall, everyone in the cabin staring at one another in shock. If the engines hadn't caught, Tracy and maybe one other jumper next to him might have made it. The rest of us would have died, in a matter of seconds.

We never did find that smoke and we couldn't have cared less. We were happy just to be alive and having survived another wild ride in 75 Charlie.

I had another near crash

in a Twin Beech over the Gila that didn't have a thing to do with an empty tank. It had to do with "down air."

I was flying that day with Dale Major, the pilot of Jumper Two. I'd just finished dropping a four-man load on the Gila, and we were trying to make our way back to Grant County Airport. Trying, because the forest was covered in cumulus storm cells; there were so many we couldn't find a pathway through them to the airport.

I didn't want to attempt a flight directly through them any more than Dale did. I was fresh from another flight with Tuck in Jumper One where we'd been forced to do that as we threaded our way home from another fire drop on the Gila. We were forced to fly through a storm because we were below a mountain range with nowhere else to go, and the storm was directly in our path.

Tuck told me to hold the maps up against the windshield, fearing the hail with the oncoming storm would shatter it. We slammed right through it and when we finally landed, I looked at the aircraft's wings. Their leading surfaces looked like they'd been worked over with a ball-peen hammer. It was taken off flight status until it could be repaired.

Back to the flight with Dale Major. Finally he was able to work through the storm cells until we cleared Signal Peak and entered the plains leading to the airport. But another storm was centered over the

strip and we couldn't land.

Dale took the Twin Bitch over to the Burro Mountains south of Silver City. He was also almost out of gas, but he didn't bother worrying me about that because there was nothing either of us could have done about it anyway.

Around the bars and coffee tables we'd argued about whether down air goes all the way to the ground. Some said it did; others said it didn't.

We hit down air over the Burros. Dale had the stick in his lap and the throttles clear to the firewall, in the position known as "balls to the wall." I'm no pilot, but I've ridden right seat long enough to know he was pulling the nose straight up and feeding it maximum power.

We continued straight down. All I could think of to do was crank my seatbelts tighter. The aircraft was equipped with military-style metal bucket seats with cross-over chest and lap belts. I kept sawing on those straps trying to snug my belly button up against my rectum as we plummeted down to about 10 feet. Ten feet seemed to be my magic number in low-flight Twin Beeches.

The engines suddenly took hold and we bounced back up in the air and made our uneventful way to the airport.

I was happy to announce to my fellow jumpers that down air doesn't go all the way to the ground – at least not all the time. At least not one time in a certain Twin Beech over the Burro Mountains!

In the summer of 1961, I was a green new squadleader. I had a cargo run in a C-46 aircraft piloted by a hire-on pilot; the regular Johnson mountain pilots were out of time due to the intense fire season. I had a drop scheduled for a large fire near Shearer airstrip.

In those years we used a single static line for each bundle going out the door on a single pass. I was stacking five bundles at a time in the door. I was the only experienced man aboard; the other kickers were fire warehousemen, drafted for this assignment because we were short of trained kickers.

The pilot was flying much too fast for an airdrop operation, and I was too damned green and unsure of myself to tell him to slow 'er down. The first series of bundles proved that; several of them "sailed" over the empennage.

On the second pass the cargo 'chute on one of the bundles sailed up over the horizontal stabilizer and remained there in drogue, as the bundle broke free. We started immediately losing altitude. The pilot had lost complete control of the aircraft; it was pitching sharply downward in an uncontrolled dive.

I quickly grabbed the large knife located aft of the door for such emergencies, and leaned as far out as I could, trying to locate the fouled static line and cut it free. I wasn't wearing either an emergency rig or retention, as was the norm in those rather free-and-easy years. I didn't cut the right one, so I leaned out even farther

and continued sawing away.

One of the warehousemen, **George Cross** (MSO-74), later to become a smokejumper, grabbed my belt and held on, or else I would have fallen out the door. It didn't matter; we were extremely close to crashing anyhow. We were down to less than a hundred feet, I found out later.

Finally I cut the right one, the tangled 'chute flew up off the tail and the pilot regained control.

That did it. I got on the horn and told that pilot in no uncertain terms he either slowed this thing down or I was going to cancel the flight and blame him for it. I completed the drop without further problems.

When I landed I went back

into the loft and filed my drop report and really thought no more about it. It was a busy season, and I had a lot more work to do.

Unbeknown to me at the time, the pilot strode right over to the pilot's shack and quit. Good riddance to bad rubbish, as we used to say as kids.

Now let me put these stories into context, as I've tried to do with my silk stories.

In these pages I came up with five "war stories" about flights in Forest Service aircraft. I can't possibly tally all the flights I made in 22 years, but I can make a fairly close estimate. Assuming an average of 20 flights a year for my first four years, I made 80 flights. Assuming an average of 50

flights a year for the next six years, after I became a spotter – there were years I made closer to a hundred – I made another 300 flights.

So I made at least 400 flights during my smokejumping career. Through the 18 years with MEDC, I probably averaged 5-10 flights a year, totaling another 90 to 100 flights. My grand total comes to about 500 flights, conservatively estimated.

Out of 500 flights the number of risky ones that came to mind were five; one out of every hundred flights was hairy. It's obvious to me that a 99-to-1 ratio of insignificant flights indicates the flying I did for the Forest Service was a lot like the jumping. It just wasn't that big a deal. 🦋

A Smokejumper Story

by **Earl Dodds** (McCall '49)

I recently received a copy of Earl's book "Tales From The Last Of The Big Creek Rangers." In 1958, the Chamberlain District, Payette N.F., was combined with the Big Creek District, and Earl headed up an area of almost 800,000 acres as District Ranger. Ed Allen (MYC-68) writes in the Foreword of the book: "Earl Dodds was one of the last of the 'on the ground' district rangers in the USFS. He spent more than 25 years as the ranger on the Big Creek District, located in what is now the Frank Church-River of No Return Wilderness in central Idaho. Twenty-five years on one district is unthinkable in today's (Forest) Service."

As a continuing part of preserving smokejumper history by this magazine, I'm going to print three of the stories from Earl's book. The following is the start.

—(Ed.)

Undoubtedly the most exciting times of my life were the two summers of 1949-50 that I was one of the smokejumpers at the McCall Smokejumper Base. I racked up a total of 28 jumps, a respectable number at that time when smokejumping was pretty much a seasonal job for college students.

This is no longer the case as smokejumping has become a lifelong career for many guys, not a few of whom have more than 400 jumps, and as many as 200 of these actual fire jumps. Consequently, I am a little reluctant to write, as I am certainly not an expert in this field.

Smokejumping, when I started at McCall in 1949, was still somewhat in the pioneer stage. The Forest Service was still very much involved in per-

fecting equipment and techniques for parachuting firefighters – smokejumpers – to make initial attacks on forest fires while the fires had just started and were small. Of course, things have changed a great deal over the years, but this little story is about conditions as I remember them at that time.

The summer of 1949 was a particularly busy one for firefighters with a number of large, project-sized fires on the Payette National Forest and lots of small lightning-caused fires for the smokejumpers. At times, we were so busy that the turnaround from one fire to the next was often a matter of a few hours. That is, you had no sooner returned to base from one fire than you were given a little time to refresh your fire pack and get a new parachute and you were on your way to the airport for another jump.

We thought that this was just great, and everyone loved all the excitement.

At McCall the program centered on the use of two airplanes: the famous Ford Trimotor and the lesser known single-engine Travelair 6000. Even in 1949 these were old airplanes, but they were great for smokejumping as they were slow and afforded a stable platform to jump from. But their slowness was a detriment when it came to dead heading to far reaches of the backcountry, like the Middle Fork of the Salmon River area, in pursuit of smokes.

So on this particular day, when the Forest Service overhead knew that there would be a lot of smokejumper activity, they borrowed the much more-modern Douglas DC-3 from the Missoula Smokejumper Base. I believe that this was the first time that the McCall crew got to jump out of the “Doug,” as it was called.

As I remember it, the little incident in this story took place about mid-August 1949, starting the morning after a particularly violent lightning storm on the eastern part of the Payette.

Early in the morning, shortly after daylight, the Doug took off from McCall, headed east to the backcountry with a full load of 12 jumpers that included me. The first smoke we found was somewhere on lower Big Creek, and it was starting to grow in size. The spotter put eight jumpers on it, which left four of us in the airplane.

Then the Doug turned south for a few miles and found another smoke in Little Soldier Creek. LaVon “Scotty” Scott (MYC-48) and I were the

next two on the jump list, so out of the door we went. I don’t remember much about the actual jump other than we both hit the jump spot without “treeing up.”

It’s what happened next that helped make this jump so memorable. The Doug made a low pass over the jump spot to drop our fire packs, only nothing was dropped. Then the airplane gained a little altitude and made a big circle over the deep canyon, downslope from us, for another pass.

Just about the time that the airplane was on the far edge of the circle, and probably the better part of a mile from us, out comes a cargo chute with our fire packs.

“Look, Scotty – that’s our gear!” I said. We watched in wonderment as the cargo chute floated slowly down and out of sight behind a spur ridge.

Luckily there were still two jumpers in the Doug with fire packs. The pilot and the spotter got their act together, made another pass over our jump spot and dropped the fire packs of the two unfortunate jumpers still in the airplane. These two guys didn’t get to jump that day.

I have often wondered what would have happened if Scotty and I had been the last two in that Doug load. I suppose we would have tried fighting fire with our bare hands, as we wouldn’t have had our Pulaskis and shovels. And we might have been pretty hungry and cold that night without our sleeping bags and fire rations.

The two of us managed to get the fire out and mopped up in short order. We were anxious to get back to McCall for another jump.

While we were still in the airplane, we had been instructed to stay put after the fire was out and the Forest Service packer would find us. No one showed up for a couple of days, so we decided to pack our jump gear and firefighting tools over to a nearby huge boulder, that seemed to dominate the landscape and was a good place to sack out until the packer found us.

As I recall, this rock was about the size of a school bus. Day four came and still no packer and the food supply was getting pretty thin. I told Scotty that I was going to see if I could find our two fire packs that had somehow been unloaded from the Doug in the wrong place and were now somewhere in the bottom of the canyon far below us.



Earl Dodds (Courtesy E. Dodds)

He said, "Have at it, but it's like trying to find a needle in a haystack."

It must have been my lucky day, because I hiked down the slope and right to the two packs that were lying in the bottom of a dry gulch and in good shape. I removed the two food bags and left the rest of the stuff right where I found them. I wouldn't be surprised if our firefighting tools, hard hats, and the cargo chute are still there to this day.

Scotty could hardly believe that I had found the fire packs so easily, but he was sure glad to get the food resupply. We could have stayed there on that rock for another three days.

The next day the packer showed up with pack mules for our gear and a couple of saddle horses for us and took us to the Bernard Guard Station on the Middle Fork. The Travelair came and got us the next morning and we finally made it back to McCall.

I'm going to use this opportunity to tell the reader a little about smokejumping as I remember it in 1949. From what I have written so far, it sounds like all you do is find a smoke and jump out of the airplane, but there is a lot more to it than that.

A successful jump involves the skills and coor-

dination of three people: the pilot, the spotter and the jumper. The pilot has to keep the airplane at the proper altitude and air speed and headed into the wind at the proper angle.

The spotter is the guy who selects the jump spot, determines the drift, and slaps the jumper on the shoulder telling him to jump. The spotter and the pilot have to work as a team in determining the all-important drift.

Here's a hypothetical situation: The pilot finds a smoke in a stand of timber on the side of a small hill in Chamberlain Basin. The smoke is drifting from the south to the north, and, lo and behold, there is a small grassy meadow right under the drifting smoke and about a quarter-mile from the fire – a natural jump spot. So the pilot flies the airplane on a line over the fire and then the jump spot.

When the plane is directly over the jump spot and right above where the spotter would like for the jumpers to land, he throws out either a crêpe paper-like streamer or a small drift chute that has been engineered to fall at the same rate as a jumper hanging below his parachute.

Let's say the streamer doesn't go straight down, but due to wind, drifts off to the north and lands in the timber about 300 yards past the meadow. That's the drift, and on the next pass the spotter signals the jumper to exit the airplane when the ship is 300 yards south of the meadow, counting on the drift to get the jumper right in there.

Once he leaves the airplane and experiences the opening shock of his parachute, the jumper is on his own. The noisy airplane is fast moving away from you and you are hanging there in silence in the sky with very little sense that you are actually falling to earth.

But the jumper had better not just hang there; it's now up to him to control the chute in such a way that he will, indeed, land in the designated jump spot.

In my day, we didn't have lots of ability to control the chute. However, it was engineered with two slots in the back that gave it a forward motion, and you could pull on a line that would partly close one of the slots, causing the chute to turn. So you did have a little opportunity to pick your landing spot. Some of the guys with a lot of jumps became very good at landing in the designated area.

Now for the landing: I think that everybody sweats out the landing to some degree. If you are dropping into a grassy meadow or pasture land, where most of the practice jumps take place, there's not much to be concerned about. But that is seldom the case on an actual fire jump.

It seemed to me that when you were about 100 feet or so off the ground, you were coming in so fast that you were pretty much committed. There wasn't much that you could do to avoid that downed tree or that pile of rocks, so try to do exactly what you were told to do during training. Keep your feet pretty close together, bend your knees slightly, and the instant you make ground contact, roll forward on the balls of your feet, then to your shoulder and do the somersault-type maneuver – called an Allen roll – that you have practiced many times during training.

The idea is not to take all the jolt of the landing on your feet and legs, but to spread this out as much as possible.

There's one more part to a successful jump, and that's the cargo drop of fire packs with the tools for fighting the fire and the provisions for the jumpers to spend the next several days in the great outdoors.

This part of the operation is pretty much the pilot's show. His objective is to get the fire packs on the ground without hanging them up in a tree. He usually tries for a low pass over the jump spot. Not anywhere as low as a crop duster, but a little on that order.

This gives him a better opportunity to place the load exactly where he wants it, and he need have little concern about drift. The spotter has to shove the fire packs out of the door upon the pilot's signal, but that doesn't take a lot of moxie; the cargo drop is pretty much the pilot's show. I think the experienced jumper pilots take as much pride in making a good cargo drop as the jumpers do with their jump.

I would like to give the reader a little more insight into smokejumping. There is a world of difference between a practice jump made during training and an actual fire jump in the mountains.

For one thing, the jump spot for a fire is, more often than not, on a partial clearing on a steep, somewhat rocky, south-facing slope. Sometimes the terrain and timber is such that the spotter

can't find anything like a clearing, and you have to jump into the trees. In that case, he tries to find a stand of young trees that are not so tall that they pose a letdown problem, should the jumper hang up.

The smokejumper trainers and the squadleaders all caution against developing an "old hat," "this is-routine stuff" approach to the actual jump as well as a cavalier, free-and-easy, haughty attitude. It is best if everyone stays focused, tends strictly to business, and is a little scared and apprehensive.

In my case, the smokejumper overhead need not have been concerned that I was not scared. With only 28 jumps to my credit, I never got into a "this is old hat" attitude when it came to jumping out of an airplane.

However, I do remember one jump when I was more than just a little scared. I believe that this was somewhere near Warm Lake on the Boise National Forest. It was late in the day, the air had gotten a little rough, and the spotter was having trouble determining the proper drift.

The first two guys had jumped – we usually used a two-man stick – and both had missed the jump spot; one guy was hung up in a tall ponderosa pine. I was the second man for the next stick.

The spotter had the pilot make a couple more passes over the jump spot while he dropped more streamers to figure out the drift. All this took a little time; it seemed like a lot of time to me. I'm standing there, all hunched over thinking: "What am I doing here, anyway? A guy could get hurt or even killed doing this!"

But my courage overcame my fear and out the door I went on the spotter's signal. I tried to do everything just like I had been taught during training; I hit the jump spot, had a good landing, a fair roll, and didn't get hurt.

When I picked myself up and unhooked the chute, I felt like I had really accomplished something. I looked up at the airplane and thought: "Just a few minutes ago, you were up there, half-scared, and now here you are on the ground after a great jump, feeling as though you are 10 feet tall and darned near invincible. What an experience!"

That's smokejumping and that's the feeling that keeps some guys coming back year after year to tally up more than 400 jumps. 🔦

Bruce E. Egger - Citizen Soldier/ Smokejumper

by Chuck Sheley (Cave Junction '59)

At some point in the past ten years or so, I was reading Stephen Ambrose's book *Citizen Soldiers: The U.S. Army from the Normandy Beaches to the Bulge to the Surrender of Germany*. There was a quote that caught my attention: "The fiftieth anniversaries of D-Day, the Battle of the Bulge, the crossing of the Rhine, and V-E Day brought forth a flood of books by veterans about their own experiences, their squads, their companies. Among the best of these are Bruce Egger and Lee Otts' *G Company's War: Two Personal Accounts of the Campaigns in Europe, 1944-1945*."

As I spend many hours in the NSA database, the name **Bruce Egger** caught my attention. I quickly ordered *G Company's War* and found out that Bruce was indeed a smokejumper at McCall after the war 1946-48. Bruce died April 8 of this year and his obit is in this issue. I think you readers might want to know a little more about a man from "The Greatest Generation."

Professor Paul Roley from Western Washington University edited and put together the book that was published in 1992. The following is taken from the University of Alabama Press site and describes the book:

"*G Company's War* is the story of a World War II rifle company in Patton's Third Army as de-

tailed in the journals of S/Sgt. Bruce Egger and Lt. Lee M. Otts, both of G Company, 328th Regiment, 26th Infantry Division.

"Bruce Egger arrived in France in October 1944, and Lee Otts arrived in November. Both fought for G Company through the remainder of the

war. Otts was wounded seriously in March 1945 and experienced an extended hospitalization in England and the United States. Both men kept diaries during the time they were in the service, and both expanded the diaries into full-fledged journals shortly after the war.

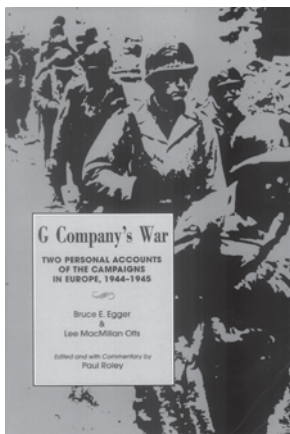
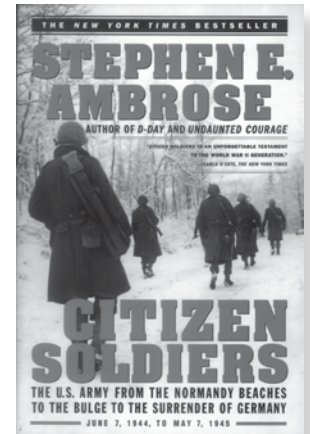
"These are the voices of ordinary soldiers—the men who did the fighting—not the generals and statesmen who viewed events from a distance."

Toward the end of *Citizen Soldiers*, Stephen Ambrose says about Bruce: "There is no typical GI among the millions who served in Northwest Europe, but Bruce Egger surely was representative. He was a mountain man from central Idaho. At the end of 1943 he was in ASTP (Army Specialized Training Program) at Kansas State. When the ASTP was cut, he got assigned to Fort Leonard Wood for training.

"In October 1944 he arrived in France and went on the line with G Company on November 6. He served out the war in almost continuous front-line action. He never missed a day of duty. He had his close calls, but was never wounded. In this he was unusually lucky. G Company had arrived on Utah Beach on September 8, 1944, with a full complement of 187 enlisted men and six officers.

"By May 8, 1945, a total of 625 men had served in its ranks. Fifty-seven men of G Company were killed in action, 183 were wounded, 116 got trench foot, and 51 frostbite."

Bruce came home, jumped a few years while getting his degree in Forestry. After retiring from the Forest Service in 1979, he and his wife, Leora,



moved to Prineville, Oregon.

In the next to last paragraph in the postscript of his book, Bruce says: "More than four decades have passed since those terrible months when we endured the muds of Lorraine, the bitter cold of the Ardennes, the dank cellars of Saarlautern, and the twenty-five mile road marches through Germany, but sometimes these events are as clear in my mind as if they had occurred yesterday. We were all miserable and cold and exhausted most of the time, and we were all scared to death that the next action would be our last one. But we were young and strong then, possessed of the marvelous resilience of youth, and for all the misery and fear

and the hating of every moment of it, the war was a great, if always terrifying, adventure. Not a man among us would want to go through it again, but we are all proud of having been so severely tested and found adequate."

Les Joslin, Editor, OldSmokeys Newsletter, Pacific NW Forest Service Association says, "His is the 'all-American boy' story - a boy from the West who becomes an heroic soldier at a young age, works his way through college as a smokejumper to become a forester, and serves a true Forest Service career mostly in the field where the real work is done. I was inspired just reading and writing about him. A real role model for America's youth." 🦋

1948 SMOKEJUMPERS HOPES AND HIGHJINKS END THE SEASON

by Bruce Egger (McCall '46)

*From "And There We Were,"
produced by the McCall 60th Anniversary Reunion Committee.*

The rules of the writing contest, requiring stories by trainees of the 1940s to be 40 percent accurate, brings to mind a quotation of Mark Twain: "When I was younger I could remember anything, whether it had happened or not; but I am getting old, and soon I shall remember only the latter."

For me, soon has arrived, and without the information **Leo Cromwell** (IDC-66) provided, I couldn't have filled the gaps in the framework of this story.

In 1948, 11 of the 61 jumpers who trained that spring or took their practice jumps at McCall were assigned to Idaho City. Most were reluctant to leave the resort town. The 61 total

included **Lloyd Johnson** (MYC-43), **John Ferguson** (MYC-43), **Dale Fickle** (MYC-45), 12 of the 1946 recruits, 16 of the 1947 beginners and 30 rookies.

Age categories included two men in their early 30s, a large group from age 22 to 29 (many were veterans of World War II, several from airborne units), and about an equal number of 18 to 21 year-olds.

Some of the younger men from the Boise area talked at times in a jargon that was difficult for the older men to understand. They had some odd, but humorous, expressions. One expression commonly used was "good berries." If something was good and they were in agreement, "good berries" was the statement. I never learned if they had resurrected an old saying or coined a new phrase.

The deep snowpack in the

mountains and June rains kept the moisture content high in the heavy fuels of the forests until late in the fire season. Consequently, there were fewer and smaller fires that summer. A rapid melt of the snowpack in late May and early June caused flooding, which resulted in damage to roads and trails on the national forests.

By the middle of July, it was obvious the fire season would be late, Region One requested that the 10 jumpers they financed be sent to Riggins to help repair flood damage.

Except for our leader, **John Ferguson**, the crew of **Kenny Roth** (MYC-46), **Jim Graham** (MYC-47), **Willie Stevenson** (MYC-48), **Max Glaves** (MYC-47), **Richard "Paperlegs" Peterson** (MYC-47), three others and I were bachelors. Since Riggins was not a resort town and there

was no lake or golf course, we traveled to McCall in private cars after work Friday and returned Sunday night or early Monday morning. Five of this group played on the McCall "Payette Lakes" baseball team.

We worked at Riggins from July 20 through Sept. 10. Those of us who hadn't jumped on a fire made a practice jump Sept. 11, and some jumped on Sept. 12 and Sept. 16 fires.

Wayne Webb (MYC-46), **Bill Watts** (MYC-48), "**Curly**" **Rea** (MYC-46), **Del Catlin** (MYC-47), **Delmer Jones** (MYC-48), **Carl Rosselli** (MYC-48), **Francis Doffing** (MYC-48), and **Jim Crockett** (MYC-48) were dispatched to the Panther Creek Fire at 4:15 p.m., Sept. 21. It was too windy to jump upon arrival, so the Ford Trimotor landed at Salmon and the men jumped at 7:30 p.m. after the wind had subsided. At that time the man-caused fire was 400 acres in size and spreading.

Johnson, Roth, **Seymour "Pete" Peterson** (MYC-46), "Paperlegs" Peterson, **Roger "Toad" Davidson** (MYC-47), **Terrell Siepert** (MYC-47), **Virgil Greene** (MYC-48), and I jumped on the fire at 9:15 a.m., Sept. 22. It had grown to 600 acres. Although the fire report doesn't say so, there was a ground crew on the fire with about 20 men from a local mine.

The fire report says the fire was controlled at 9 a.m., so we probably took time to open a couple of cans of juice. On the Sept. 16 fire, George Lafferty, a Challis N.F. ranger, had jokingly remarked, "Jumpers are heavy juice drinkers and need to

be fortified with apricot nectar before they can start to work."

We were poorly equipped by future standards. We had no hard hats, fire-resistant clothes nor fire shelters. Crosscut saws were used because power saws weighed about 80 pounds. It took teamwork to be productive with a crosscut, and training in its use was important. If one or both men on a team rode the saw, frustrations could generate caustic comments and even strain friendships.

As we were taking a break on the fireline Sept. 24 with several miners, "Toad" Davidson took a small piece of ore from his pocket and said, "Look what I found." I knew he had picked up the ore Sept. 16 at a lead mine near or in the Patterson Creek Fire on the Challis N.F. One miner's eyes appeared to grow to the size of silver dollars. He demanded, "Where did you find that?"

I thought, Toad, you are going to be in trouble if you don't tell the truth! Toad replied, "I found it two days ago building fireline." I thought, you're a goner, Toad – may the Lord help you!

The miner offered to pay Toad if he would take him to the source of the ore. Toad hemmed and hawed and finally said, "I don't remember exactly where I found it and I don't think I could take you there."

The miner, suspecting that Toad was pulling his leg, became angry. For a moment I was concerned for Toad's safety because, at that time, residents of the Salmon River were not called Salmon River savages for noth-

ing. Perhaps Toad was fortunate to be with 15 jumpers. One should not trifle with a prospector's dreams of striking it rich.

A heavy rain started falling the afternoon of Sept. 24. The ground crew was released first; then we left the fire at 5 p.m. for Salmon. As we had packed our equipment, one of the jumpers had discovered that his sleeping bag was missing. Before we reached the road, a sharp-eyed member of our group noticed the sleeping bag cached high in a tree alongside the trail.

The rain continued most of Saturday, so we were faced with spending a weekend in Salmon, not an exciting prospect. Most of us visited one or two bars in Salmon and a dance hall at the edge of town Saturday evenings.

I was amused to hear two non-veteran jumpers telling local bar patrons war stories about parachuting into combat in Europe and the Battle of the Bulge. They had memorized the accounts listening to airborne veterans. I wondered how many times they had used the narratives and on what occasions.

The weather broke Sunday afternoon and, as we flew to McCall in the DC-3 over snow-covered terrain, it was obvious fire season had ended.

I am reminded of a quotation from Ogden Nash at this 55th anniversary reunion with three generations of jumpers in attendance:

*How confusing the beams from
memory's lamp are,
One day a bachelor, the next a
grandpa,
What is the secret of the trick?
How did I get old so quick?* 🦉

Mann Gulch Recovery

by Charlie Palmer (Missoula '95)

They were given perhaps the most difficult task ever assigned to a group of smokejumpers. It had nothing to do with putting out a fire. In typical jumper fashion, they did what was asked of them, and more, then moved on, as best they could.

"It's always something you remember," **Dick Wilson** (MSO-48) would tell me, more than 60 years later.

He, along with seven other Missoula smokejumpers, were assigned the grim chore of packing their dead brothers out of Mann Gulch over the course of two days, Aug. 6-7, 1949. The previous day, Aug. 5, 10 smokejumpers and a recreation guard, himself a former jumper, had lost their lives when fire swept up the hillside from below them.

Two others smokejumpers on the crew, **Bill Hellman** (MSO-46) and **Joe Sylvia** (MSO-48), had initially survived their burns, only to succumb the next day in a Helena hospital. That left 11 bodies in the gulch that needed to be carried to the top of the ridge, where a Johnson Flying Service Bell 47D was waiting to fly them out, one by one.

Two men would carry the litter, as best they could, up the steep slope. It was not an easy proposition.

"The guy on the downwind side would need to get out after he couldn't hold his breath any longer," Wilson shared.

For most of those helping in the recovery, only a twist of fate kept them from being amongst the deceased. They were ahead of the dead on the jump list, but a dry run on the Travelair just before the fire call to Mann Gulch had meant that those who were now dead bumped ahead of them on the list.

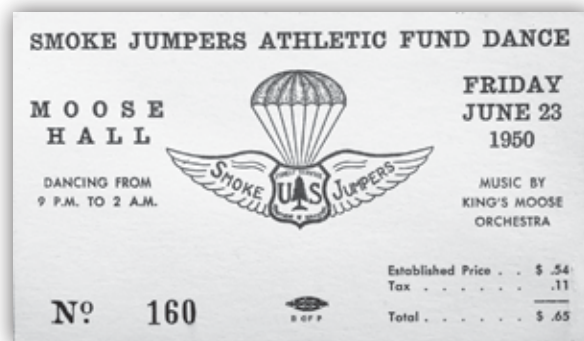
Knowing the historical importance of what they were doing, Wilson had brought along a camera to document some of their activities. Those photos have been graciously donated to the smokejumper collection at the University of Montana's Mansfield Library. One of the shots is a

crew photo of those who helped.

While the master action for the recovery mission lists the names of eight individuals – **Francis Anywaush** (MSO-46), **Robert DeZur** (MSO-49), **Eugene Dougherty** (MSO-48), **Edmund Landerdorff** (MSO-46), **Herbert Oertli** (MSO-48), **Otto Ost** (MSO-46), **Skip Stratton** (MSO-47), and **Wilson** – 14 men are in the photo. One of them is **Wag Dodge** (MSO-41), the foreman who survived the blowup that claimed most of his men.

If you should happen to know the identities of any of the unknown men in the photo, or have any further information about the recovery efforts in Mann Gulch over the course of those two days, please contact the National Smokejumper Association.

To watch the full video interview with Richard "Dick" Wilson, please go to: <https://youtube/9L9kh5OBMs8> or simply search for *Mann Gulch remembered: An interview with Richard "Dick" Wilson.* 📺



The guys at Missoula in 1950 came up with a dance as a way to raise money for softball equipment for the evening games at Nine Mile. Moose Hall was decorated with red and white striped chutes.

Add the nurses from St. Francis Hospital and it was a successful event. (Courtesy **Chuck Pickard** (MSO-48))

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75 Years of Smokejumpers 1940–2014

This spiral-bound directory contains the names of all 5,884 smokejumpers who completed training during the first 75 years of smokejumping.

The alphabetical list contains the names of all smokejumpers. The book also features each base with their rookies listed chronologically by year trained.

The last time this listing was done by Roger Savage (MSO-56) was for the 2000 National Reunion in Redding and it sold out in a short amount of time.

All-Time Smokejumpers listing \$15/\$5 Shipping. Use the order form on the merchandise insert.

NSA History Preservation Project

by Chuck Sheley (Cave Junction '59)

Base History Writers Needed

A large part of the NSA History Preservation Project will be to get an accurate recording of the history of each individual smoke-jumper base. This is going to be a large project and will take the help of many of you.

There will probably be a document for each base that one or two members could start and others add to over a period of time, rounding the corners of our history.

Bottom line: This is way too big for a few people to handle, but absolutely necessary to do if we want to do an accurate recording of smoke-jumper history.

From Roger Savage's (MSO-56) *75 Years of Smokejumpers*, here are the bases listed:

WINTHROP	(NCSB)	1940, 1945-PRESENT
MISSOULA	(MSO)	1940-PRESENT
McCALL	(MYC)	1943-PRESENT
CAVE JUNCTION	(CJ)	1943-1981
IDAHO CITY	(IDC)	1948-1969
GRANGEVILLE	(GAC)	1951-PRESENT
WEST YELLOWSTONE	(WYS)	1951-PRESENT
REDDING	(RDD)	1957-PRESENT
FAIRBANKS	(FBX)	1959-PRESENT
ANCHORAGE	(ANC)	1962-1972
REDMOND	(RAC)	1964-PRESENT
BOISE	(BOI)	1970-1979 (USFS)
BOISE	(NIFC)	1986-PRESENT (BLM)
LAGRANDE	(LDG)	1974-1982

If you are willing to help, please contact Chuck Sheley. Contact info is on page three of this issue. Remember, you do not have to do the whole works but we need to start somewhere. 🧑

THE VIEW FROM OUTSIDE THE FENCE



by Chris Sorensen
(Associate)

IN MAY, THE Prescott, Arizona City Council voted unanimously to accept the bid of the Los Angeles County Fire Museum to purchase the two Granite Mountain Hotshots crew buggies. The bid was \$25,000 which was the minimum bid. Bidders were required to bid on both trucks as a package. The \$25,000 was funded by a private donor. One of the buggies is now on display at the Los Angeles County Fire Museum. The other buggy is on loan to the Hall of Flame in Phoenix, Arizona. If a museum/memorial is ever established in Prescott, the buggy at the Hall of Flame will go back to Prescott. Survivors of the Granite Mountain IHC expressed interest in purchasing Station 7, the quarters of the Granite Mountain IHC, but were unable to submit a bid in the short time allotted. The City did not receive any bids for the Granite Mountain

Station and was planning on listing it with a real estate agent along with surplus City property. The City of Prescott is selling surplus equipment and real estate to pay down a 78 million dollar deficit in the City's public safety pension.

The Los Angeles County Fire Museum is building a new 10 million dollar museum in Bellflower, California, that will open this fall. They have 60 pieces of rolling stock in their collection, including both pumpers used as Engine 51 in the NBC TV show "Emergency!", the 1965 open cab Crown Fire Coach and the 1973 enclosed cab Ward LaFrance P80 Ambassador triple-combination pumper along with Squad 51, the 1972 Dodge D300 "dually" chassis. The museum has 3000 paying members.

A 25th anniversary edition of Norman Maclean's book *Young Men and Fire* has been published. The new edition includes a forward by Pulitzer prize winning author Timothy Egan. Being in print for twenty-five years, I would expect *Young Men and Fire* to be in print for another twenty-five years.

For the first time, officials on the July Fire located in the Zortman-Landusky area of North Central Montana required water tenders from outside the area to undergo decontamination to avoid the spread of tiger mus-

sels, an aquatic invasive species. Water tanks and equipment from outside the region are washed in hot water or a chemical bath before they're filled with water and deployed on the fire. At least two recreational boats entering Montana have been found to be contaminated with tiger mussels at boat check stations.

Among the projects underway at the Missoula Technology and Development Center are core temperature capsules which are swallowed by firefighters. The capsules then transmit the firefighters temperature via blue tooth and along with other instrumentation can determine how firefighters respond to their environment. Work continues on a new descender that would prevent a rappeller from falling to their death if they lose consciousness. Project Leader Tony Petrilli (MSO-89) and his group continue to work on the third generation fire shelter.

Smokejumper/Loadmaster Foreman Boyd Burtch (MSO-88) is leading a project to use GPS technology to drop cargo very accurately. Yet another group is working on drones and how they might be used on fires to conduct reconnaissance. These are but a few of the projects in progress at the Missoula Technology Development Center.

Speed, Range, Payload. Aggressive Initial Attack. 🔦



NSA Scholarships 2017

Photos Courtesy Recipients



Amy Duning
Boise State University



Kerissa Sheley
University of Oregon



Annelise Nerison
University of Montana



Jacob Watson
University of Minnesota



Darin Jones
Virginia Commonwealth University



Kortney Dietz
Washington State University

Layout Design: Johnny Kirkley (CJ-64)

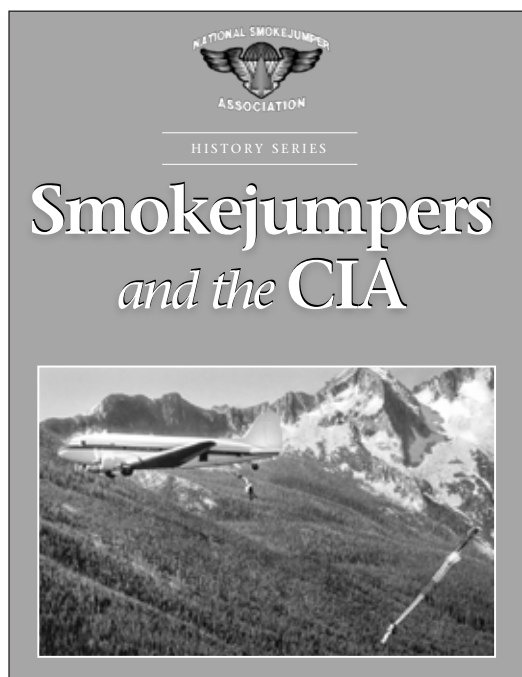
For more about the 2017 NSA scholarship winner, see page 2.

Check the NSA website

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Smokejumpers *and the CIA*

Over 25 Years of Service

Smokejumpers worked for the CIA (Agency) over a 25-plus year period. Beginning in the spring of 1951, the CIA sent two agents to the smokejumper base at Nine Mile, Montana, to be trained to parachute into mountainous and isolated terrain. The agents apparently reported back that there was a cadre of men already trained and willing to take on whatever the Agency wanted done. The CIA had realized in Smokejumpers men who were problem solvers and could get the job done under the most difficult circumstances.





SOUNDING OFF from the editor



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

IF THERE IS one item that comes up at our NSA Board of Directors meeting, it is: "How do we get the younger (current) smokejumpers to join?" I've listened to a lot of "good ideas" over the 20 years that I've been on the board. But the bottom line is that we may never connect with the current smokejumpers. Many of them are career jumpers with years of fire experience. You can't crack the hiring list now days without at least five years of fire experience and three of those should be with a Hotshot crew.

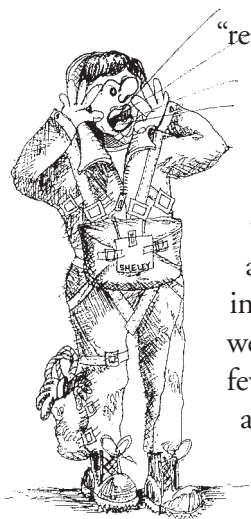
One of our main goals is to preserve the history of Smokejumping. That sure does not strike a chord in the recruitment of any of the current jumpers. However, there is one area in which we can cross generational lines – helping smokejumpers when in need.

That brings me to the

Good Samaritan Fund. Thanks to your generosity, the NSA has provided over \$114,000 to smokejumpers and their families in times of need. I've got another article in this issue concerning a current need of a family.

In July I sent out an email to some of you explaining the need of the Chung family. I was hesitant to do this feeling that I might be intruding into some member's privacy. At the same time, I felt that this is an urgent need and it should be known. If a person does not want to read the email, just hit the delete key.

The response shows the class and quality of the membership of our organization, revealing the character of the type of persons who were smokejumpers for a year or two and then moved on to the



"real world."

Please refer to "The Good Samaritan Fund and A Greater Need" in this issue for more information. I'm writing this column in July and you will be reading it in October. Just within two weeks of my email to just a few members, we've raised a good amount to help the Chung family. I'll give a more complete update in the January issue.

The bottom line: Regardless of whether or not we attract new members from the current crop of smokejumpers, the NSA can be remembered as an organization who could be called on in time of need. We are the silent partners of smokejumpers—in current jargon, "We have your back."

Thanks to all of you who have supported the NSA. We will continue to support smokejumpers and their families in times of need. We don't need payback or rewards to do the right thing. 💡

Are You Going To Be "Temporarily Away"?

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

If you are leaving your mailing address during the months of March, June, September and/or December, please let Chuck Sheley know. He can hold your magazine and mail it upon your return *OR* mail it to your seasonal address.

Please help us save this triple mailing expense. Or join our electronic mailing list and receive a PDF version instead. Chuck's contact information is in the information box on page three. 💡

Going Down On The Bismark

by Rob Shaver (McCall '67)

Bismark Creek is some 50 miles northeast of the smokejumper base in McCall, Idaho, deep in what is now the *Frank Church-River of No Return Wilderness*. The two-manner fire there in August 1967 was unremarkable – maybe an acre or two. But looking back these 50 years, I still recall my arrival.

It had been a fairly busy fire season. As a rookie, I had jumped my first fire even before completing the prescribed seven training jumps, and I jumped 13 more before the season ended.

To serve the 2.3 million acre Payette National Forest, our McCall base had about 57 jumpers and, initially, three or four tanker planes. There were two WWII era B-17 bombers equipped with 1,200-gallon tanks. There was also a pair of Navy torpedo bombers – TBMs – outfitted with 600-gallon tanks.

We had three jump planes. The DC-3 powered with standard radial engines could carry 16 men and their gear. There were also two single engine

turbo porters that could carry four guys. These turbo porters were taildraggers with high mounted wings – something of an ugly duckling, not particularly graceful. The compact turbine engine was mounted far forward on a long, narrow nose.

But the plane had good STOL (short takeoff and landing) capability and a stall speed of about 46 miles an hour. This last feature allowed it to cruise at low speed over a fire so the spotter and jumpers could assess the situation, check the wind, determine a jump spot, plan the attack on the fire, and consider escape routes. Exiting from the slow-moving plane was also a breeze.

When fire activity was slow, in late afternoons the turbo porters would take off with three jumpers, plus a spotter, for patrol flights – one heading west from McCall toward the Snake River and the other east toward the Middle Fork of the Salmon.

One afternoon in July, the first plane to leave on patrol had an engine failure shortly after takeoff. It had reached an altitude of about four



Turbo-Porter Chamberlain Basin Airstrip with pilot Chuck Weldon. (Courtesy R. Shaver)

hundred feet. Jumpers had begun to remove their helmets and were settling in for the flight when the engine just quit.

Pilot **Dave Schas*** (MYC-48) nosed the plane over steeply to maintain air speed and control, and steered for a pasture just off the side of the runway while also quickly attempting restart procedures, which were futile in the brief moments available.

Frankie Bilbao (MYC-67) was seated on his gear bag facing the rear with his back against the pilot's seat. When the engine went alarmingly silent, he looked over his shoulder to see what was going on. Through the windshield, all he could see was "green grass, and it was coming fast!" There was a scramble to get helmets back on. Somebody offered the observation, "Oh, s—! We're going down!"

Timing his move, Schas pulled back on the steering yoke and brought the nose of the plane up just before they reached the ground. There was no time to level out in a glide pattern. It pancaked hard onto the meadow, shearing off the fixed landing gear on the initial contact, bounced once and skidded a short distance to a halt. Very fortunately, there were no serious injuries.

Schas had a broken wrist and a knot on his forehead. Squadleader and spotter **Bill Bull** (MYC-64), riding in the co-pilot's seat, needed a few stitches on his nose. One of the other two jumpers, either **Coy Jemmet** (MYC-63) or **Bennie Hobbs** (MYC-66), had a sprained ankle, and there were some sore backs.

The plane didn't fare so well. As soon as we heard what had happened, **Tom Hilliard** (MYC-67) and I, among others, went to the site and looked it over and talked with the guys who had been on board. The three-blade propeller was bent back around the engine cowling, the right wing was torn partially loose from its mooring atop the cabin, the landing gear was trashed, the sliding side door was sprung loose from its lower rail, the kerosene-based fuel was dripping from the tank or lines in the broken wing, and the air frame was probably pretty well skewed. Loss of power was later determined to have been caused by failure of a small component in the fuel system.

Hilliard recalls that following this incident, the Region 4 aviation officer gave critical review to the use of single-engine aircraft for flying jumpers. I

know that I never again took for granted that the planes would stay in the air.

The second turbo porter had taken off shortly after the first, unaware of the other's crash landing. Those on board were puzzled when they could not see that other plane anywhere in the sky. When they received word of the accident they circled back. The jumpers, including **John Tandberg** (MYC-67) and **Jerry Ogawa** (MYC-67), were preparing to make a rescue jump if required.

Because of the proximity to the runway, ground resources were already arriving so it was not necessary. Given the potential for a very tragic outcome, this incident fortunately turned out to be only an unwelcome, but memorable chapter in smokejumping history.

A month or so later on the evening of Aug. 19, lightning storms spread over central Idaho, and the following morning brought the rash of fire reports and the steady deployment of tanker planes and jumpers throughout the day.

Les Rosenkrance (MYC-61) and I jumped a small fire in steep canyon country above the Salmon River near Riggins. Ranchers and other ground crews arrived to assist, and we were able to leave the following morning. We got back to our McCall base about mid-afternoon.

It was completely deserted except for project manager **Del Catlin** (MYC-47). We had little time to refresh before the alarm buzzer sounded and we were back in the turbo porter with Del as spotter, heading for the fire on Bismark Creek.

As we approached the fire – an acre or so in size – we could see another larger smoke plume eight or 10 miles farther east near the Middle Fork of the Salmon River. It had been manned earlier with about eight jumpers. One of them, **Mitch Ruska** (MYC-63), had been seriously hurt and had to been flown out.

Chris Knight (RDD-66) had jumped with Mitch and he later recounted the events for me. Chris, of lighter build and with a smaller 28-foot candy stripe parachute, descended more slowly and saw Mitch go down "like a sewer lid" among standing dead trees, his canopy pulling some of them down with him. Chris said it was not a matter of "if" Mitch was hurt, but how badly. They found him lying in a tangle of logs and limbs in great pain. They suspected a fractured femur,

among other injuries, and laid out a ground-to-air signal for a radio. One was dropped and they requested a helicopter for transport.

By the time it arrived, the men had cleared a landing zone for it. Mitch passed out from pain as soon as they picked him up to move him to the chopper.

At the medical facility in McCall, examination showed no broken bones or other dire injuries. Mitch remained in the hospital a short time, maybe a day or so. He came back with a set of crutches, hobbled painfully around for a few days, laid them aside, and returned to the jump list.

At the Bismark Creek Fire, there was a pretty stiff breeze flattening the smoke cloud out to the east. We circled several times, dropped streamers and watched them sail quickly downwind. We decided the wind was too strong to risk a jump. Del thought it might decline around sundown, so our pilot flew us several miles south and landed us in a grassy meadow to wait an hour or so for calmer winds.

On our return about sundown, the wind appeared to me as strong as ever. As we circled, Del asked us what we thought of the situation. Neither of us answered. Despite the wind, the fire did not seem to be spreading all that quickly. We understood the value of getting on it this evening, taking advantage of cooler weather and rising humidity that would make our job easier. But it was already very late in the day, night was falling and we were tired from the previous day's fire. The wind was still strong, and if we did get into trouble, there was no one to back us up.

I looked at Les, and he didn't appear any cheerier at the thought of jumping than I did. But Del, a World War II paratrooper and with more than 100 fire jumps of his own, apparently read our silence as acquiescence and thought we were good for the job. So we hooked up and went out the door.

Once in the air and heading downwind toward the narrow clearing we had chosen for a landing spot, I realized I was traveling pretty fast and would likely overshoot the little meadow. I turned upwind and that allowed my FS-5 parachute's forward speed of six mph to counteract some of the wind speed. That slowed me down some, but I was still moving backward at a good pace.

Trying to steer while looking over one shoulder, I ended up off side of the clearing, over the timber. When perhaps a hundred feet above the trees, I decided I didn't want to plunge through there backward, so I turned downwind. My speed increased dramatically.

Almost immediately upon turning downwind, there directly ahead of me was a tall, dead spruce tree, completely devoid of needles, but still bearing its dry bony branches. Things were happening fast. I veered right to miss it, but as I swept by I felt the sudden jerk as the edge of my canopy snagged the twiggy top.

As I was yanked to a stop, I knew that treetop could never arrest my momentum without breaking, and I tensed, helpless, waiting for the impending snap and expected free-fall plunge of 30 or 40 feet to the ground.

The snag didn't break, and the next instant I was swinging back like a pendulum toward the tree. Oh, great! Now I'm going to be impaled ... stabbed in the back by one of the dry branches. I tensed again for the impact. It never came.

I swung back and hit nothing. I was hanging in midair. Looking up, I saw that I was suspended midway between the dead tree and its live twin, a dozen feet away. The right edge of my canopy had just grabbed the tip of the live tree as the left edge gripped the top of the snag.

I hung their 20 or 30 feet above the ground, unable to reach either tree. I retrieved the free end of my letdown rope from the leg pocket, passed it twice through the D-rings at the front of my jumpsuit, tied it off to the parachute harness and rappelled down. Gentlest landing I ever had.

Everything else was anticlimactic. Les had treed up, too, but was okay. We shucked our jumpsuits and rounded up our fire gear. The turbo made a final pass overhead, and then headed back for McCall.

We were alone in the quiet wilderness as night approached. The excitement was over. It was time to go to work. 🦉

**Pilot Dave Schas died in 1988 in the crash of the Twin Otter he was flying from the Redding Air Center to John Day, Ore.*

Author Rob Shaver's e-mail address is rshaver06@gmail.com.

The Good Samaritan Fund and A Greater Need

by Chuck Sheley (Cave Junction '59)

A very important part of the NSA Mission Statement, in my opinion, is “responding to special needs of smokejumpers and their families.”

This is something that the NSA membership has done well over the years since NSA President Jim Cherry proposed the establishment of the Good Samaritan Fund to the board in 2008. Along with the Scholarship Fund, the NSA has helped smokejumpers, NSA members, and non-members with over \$126,000 in assistance.

However, there are times and situations where the need is greater than the GSF can provide. Tanner Chung, the nine-year-old son of Quincy (NIFC-03) and Michelle, has endured health issues since birth. He has had over 50 surgeries and

procedures. After years of searching, Tanner has been able to find effective treatment at the Boston Children's Hospital. The NSA Good Samaritan Fund has made significant contributions to the family's three trips to Boston.

In 2015, it was discovered that their house had toxic mold due to faulty construction. The contractor has filed bankruptcy and is not liable for his shoddy work. Tanner had lived in a house that contributed to his medical problems. This and medical expenses has put the family in a financial hole.

A good way to help would be to make a **Good Sam Fund** (GSF) donation designated to the Chung family.

If you have already made this donation, I



Quincy and Michelle with daughter Rylee and son Tanner. (NSA files)



Tanner Chung, son of Quincy (NIFC-03) and Michelle, during his last trip for medical treatments. Help was given through the NSA Good Samaritan Fund. Thanks to all of you for your support of this fund. (Courtesy Q. Chung)

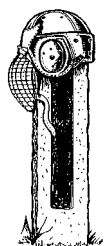
want to thank you on behalf of the NSA and the Chung family. This is a time where we can help a smokejumper family in need. Please consider this request for help. Little bits from many can add up to a lot.

GSF donations can be sent to me at:
Chuck Sheley, 10 Judy Ln., Chico CA 95926

I would like to thank the following NSA mem-

bers who have contributed to the Chung family through the Good Samaritan Fund or the "go-fundme" website. Apologies to anyone I missed as some contributions via the website were done by wives or given anonymously and I couldn't connect up with our membership list.

Bob James	(MSO-75)	Cory LeMay	(MYC-98)
Ben Dobrovolny	(FBX-04)	Dave Provencio	(MSO-77)
Billy McCall	(FBX-12)	Brian Veseth	(GAC-11)
Bill Cramer	(NIFC-90)	Dale Gardner	(CJ-67)
Chuck Sheley	(CJ-59)	Joe Kitzman	(NCSB-91)
Ken Coe	(FBX-80)	Davis Perkins	(NCSB-72)
Doug Stinson	(CJ-54)	Murry Taylor	(RDD-65)
George Steele	(NCSB-72)	Buck Nelson	(FBX-97)
Nels Jensen	(MSO-62)	Jon Larson	(FBX-89)
Karl Brauneis	(MSO-77)	Denis Breslin	(NCSB-69)
Pete Briant	(RDD-00)	Chip Houde	(FBX-88)
Rod Dow	(MYC-68)	Chris Boldman	(NIFC-01)
Tom Boatner	(FBX-80)	Patrick Durland	(MYC-75)
Jim Lancaster	(MYC-62)	Fred Rohrbach	(MSO-65)
Ben Smith	(MSO-64)	Roger Vorce	(FBX-82)
Brian Miller	(RDD-85)	Robert Mauck	(FBX-79)
Major Boddicker	(MSO-63)	Larry Edwards	(MSO-02)
Bill Moody	(NCSB-57)	Jim Clatworthy	(MSO-56)
John McDaniel	(CJ-57)	Jack Cahill	(MSO-58)
Kim Maynard	(MSO-82)	Gene Hamner	(MSO-67)
Ron Morlan	(RAC-69)	Rob Shaver	(MYC-67)
John Packard	(RAC-65)	Joe Stutler	(MSO-71)
Tom Kovalicky	(MSO-61)	Bob Aliber	(MSO-51)
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Brad Willard	(MSO-58)	Carl Gidlund	(MSO-58)



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:

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Gary Ricketts (Redmond '72)

Gary died May 16, 2017, after long battle with cancer. After high school, Gary enlisted in the Marine Corps and was assigned to 1st Recon Battalion in Vietnam where he received severe injuries when his helicopter came under fire.

After the service, Gary received his Associate Degree from North Idaho J.C. before his rookie year at Redmond where he jumped through the 1975 season. He then went on to Fairbanks and jumped the 1976-77 seasons.

Gary continued his education earning his

Bachelors from Eastern Washington University in 1976 and his Masters from the University of Hawaii in 1986

He enjoyed a wide range of jobs in his lifetime, including logging, and commercial fishing. Gary worked as a City Planner for the Native

community of McGrath, Alaska, and Tribal/City Administrator for the Native communities of Stebbins and Nikolai, Alaska, eventually working with Indian Health Services in Anchorage, Alaska. He spent time in Washington D.C. serving as a management assistant for the House Committee

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of Interior and Insular Affairs before starting his own management consulting company.

John O. Hoffman (Missoula '55)

John died December 6, 2016. He graduated from Montana State with a Forestry degree in 1960. John jumped out of Grangeville, where he met his wife, Cora, during the 1955, '56 and '58 seasons. He was District Ranger at Cave Junction, Oregon, during the "hippie days" and received a USDA Superior Service Award in 1974 for his work with the counter-culture movement in the Illinois Valley.

John flew large fire Air Attack during the 70s. He also served as timber staff on the Siuslaw N.F. and was Timber Staff Officer on the Siskiyou N.F. John was a key staff person during the 1987 Silver Fire and salvage and retired from the Forest Service in 1991.

Howard W. Betty (North Cascades '48)

Howard died May 2, 2017. He graduated from Okanogan H. S. in 1948 and rookied at Winthrop that same year where he continued to jump through the 1954 season. Howard continued his education and graduated from college in 1952 with his teaching degree. He went into the lumber business in 1955 and built the Methow Valley Lumber Company until his retirement in 1977.

Howard then joined the Carpenters Union and travelled jobsite to jobsite and built hundreds of homes and businesses in Okanogan County. He was a skilled cabinetmaker, avid hunter, and member of many service clubs.

Bruce E. Egger (McCall '46)

Bruce, 93, died April 8, 2017, in Portland, Oregon. After graduation from high school in 1942 he was inducted into the Army. As an infantryman in G Company, 328th Regiment, 26th Infantry Division, Bruce fought in the front lines in France and Germany. Discharged as a staff sergeant in 1946, Bruce was awarded the Bronze Star Medal and other decorations for his World War II service.

He jumped at McCall 1946-48 while obtaining his college degree from the University of Idaho. After his graduation in 1951, he began a 29-year career with the USFS.

After his retirement in 1979, he moved to Prineville, Oregon. During the 80s, Bruce completed a memoir of his World War II experiences for his children. This and the memoir of fellow soldier Lee Otts were published in 1992 as *G Company's War: Two Personal Accounts of the Campaigns in Europe, 1944-1945*.

Stephen Ambrose in his book, *Citizen Soldiers*, in talking about books by WWII veterans and their experiences, said: "Among the best of these are Bruce Egger and Lee Otts, *G Company's War: Two Personal Accounts of the Campaigns in Europe, 1944-1945*."

Roger W. Richcreek (Redmond '66)

Roger, 67, died July 18, 2014, in Loma Linda, CA. He served two tours in Vietnam as a Navy Corpsman assigned to support the Marines and received two Bronze Stars. He was highly exposed to Agent Orange but it didn't show up until his early 40s.

Roger worked for the USFS for 38 years. In addition to jumping at Redmond in 1966 and 1974, he worked as a Hotshot and served as a Law Enforcement Officer for 28 years. After his retirement in 2010, Roger was a community college instructor at Citrus College in Glendora.

Brian C. Scheuch (Missoula '55)

Brian died September 20, 2016, at his home in LaConner, WA. He graduated from the University of Washington in 1957 with a degree in Forestry and later graduated with a degree in Chemistry. He served in the Army Corps of Engineers and as a chemist for private industry. Brian later bought the Titan Co. of Seattle and retired in 2015. After retirement he consulted and volunteered in various environmental programs.

Joseph Buhaly (North Cascades '47)

Joe, 91, died May 16, 2017, in Tacoma, Washington. He was a career Forester and worked for the State Dept. of Natural Resources, USFS, Soil Conservation Service, and the Washington State University Extension Center.

Joe enlisted in the Army Air Corps in 1944 and followed with his education at Washington State University. He jumped at North Cascades 1947-50.

Joel L. "Joey" Maggio (Redding '09)

Joey, 35, died June 2, 2017, while working a tree service job in Willow Creek, CA. He was an avid wrestler in high school earning many awards and championships. Joey joined the Army in 2000, spent two years in Germany, and was with the 4th Infantry during the invasion of Iraq where he served until his discharge in 2005.

Joey started fighting wildland fires on crews in Northern California and was a member of the Zig Zag Hotshots in Oregon before his rookie year at Redding in 2009. He jumped seven seasons and had 129 jumps during his smokejumper career. In late 2016 Joey started his own business, Maggio Tree Service in Redding.

Paul E. Wagner (North Cascades '52)

Paul, 84, died June 1, 2017. He attended Earlham College before transferring to Washington State University where he graduated in 1955. Paul jumped at North Cascades during the 1952 and '53 seasons.

He entered the Air Force in 1955 and served for 27 years before retiring in 1982 as a Lt. Colonel. Paul flew F-100s in Vietnam and was awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross.

After retiring he earned two master's degrees and worked as a financial planner for seven years before moving back to his family home in Twisp. He was diagnosed with Parkinson's disease in 2005, and he and his wife moved to Huntsville, Alabama, to be near family.

Terry Egan (Cave Junction '65)

Terry died July 3, 2017. He was born in Canada migrating to the Seattle area at age five. Terry graduated from the University of Portland in 1968 and went into the U.S. Air Force where he spent the next 20 years, retiring as a Lt. Colonel. He began a second career with the state of Washington Dept. of Transportation in 1990 and earned his PhD in Education from Seattle University in 1994.

In 1997 Terry became Unit Manager for the Washington State Emergency Management Division where he lead a team that wrote the national model legislation that became Washington state's mutual aid system.

Terry jumped at Cave Junction 1965-68 and

was a member of the NSA Board of Directors heading up the Scholarship Program.

David G. Laws (Redmond '66)

Dave died July 5, 2017, from an apparent stroke. He jumped seven years, five at Redmond and two at Cave Junction. After serving in the U.S. Army, Dave attended Portland State, graduating in 1970. He was an outstanding member of the nationally ranked Portland State wrestling team. Dave studied abroad on a Fulbright U.S. Scholarship before returning to smokejumping at Cave Junction in 1973 and 1974. He left the government and was owner and operator of his lawn maintenance service in Portland.

Dave was an accomplished artist, especially of WWII events. One of his paintings was purchased by Tom Brokaw. He returned to the Gobi where he actively participated full time in running the Siskiyou Smokejumper Base Museum. He was a very popular tour guide and oversaw landscaping and grounds maintenance.

Steven R. Anderson (Missoula '63)

Steve died July 10, 2017. He attended Northwest Missouri State College and graduated from Peru State College. His eight-year-long collegiate career was split between helping his father on a farm and smokejumping. In his words smokejumping allowed him to associate with "the hardest working, best men around in any walk of life." Steve jumped at Missoula 1963-67, '69, '70, and at West Yellowstone in 1968. He was a NSA Life Member.

Steve's complete spirit extended into a legendary 30-year basketball coaching and teaching career. His coaching extended from Iowa to South Dakota to New York. He accrued a remarkable record, including various conference and state appearances and titles. Steve was inducted into the Interstate 35 Hall of Fame in Iowa and the Sports Hall of Fame in South Dakota. 🙏

Gathering at the Gobi June 2018

Mark down June 8-9 for a 2018 gathering at the Gobi. This is not a formal reunion, no registration, no fees, no program, just a chance to get together with friends and family. Pass the word around. Jumpers from all bases invited.

Days Gone By

By Harvey Versteeg (Missoula '53)

Remembering the year after my smokejumper summer, I changed my major from Forestry to History in the spring term at Michigan State. That summer I cut grass and trimmed trees along roads west of Detroit, for the Forestry Division of the Wayne County Road Commission, for 22 1/2 cents an hour more than I made as a smoke-jumper, though I did miss the plane rides and free meals on fires. So ended my career on wildfires!

I still get a bit excited whenever I hear about a new fire. But now they all seem to be a lot bigger than they were back in '53. Four years later, I made 11 more jumps as an officer in the 101st Airborne Division.

Years later, I had two indoor experiences involving forest fires and jumping.

While walking through a builders show in Grand Rapids, I noticed my adrenaline pumping and then

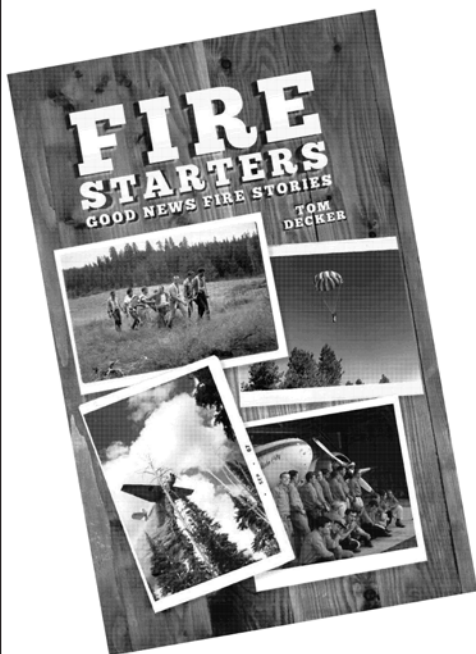
noticed a smell. My first thought was there is a forest fire in here. That can't be.

I followed the smell to a booth selling pine- and spruce-scented incense and sending out a smell from my past.

Even more years later, I was sitting at my desk in an American Airlines office, near one of its maintenance hangars at Detroit Metro Airport. I again noticed my adrenaline pumping and took stock of my environment.

Just outside, a ground crew was testing the engines on a Lockheed Electra, then used for passenger and freight hauling, and modified by the Navy to P-3s. The sound was the same as that of the planes I jumped from in the Army. My body was getting ready for a parachute jump while I was working at my desk. 🪂

The National Smokejumper Association presents



Fire Starters

Good News Fire Stories

by Tom Decker (Idaho City '65)

“Decker’s *Fire Starters* is at once a collection of images that spark the imagination, refresh memories and bring a smile of familiarity to anyone who has loved time in the woods, worked a fire line or shared in the close relationships of the ‘band of brothers.’ It’s also a challenge to dig deeper for the treasures that can be revealed through the eyes of faith and the wisdom that comes through accumulated life experiences.”

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CIA Honors its Fallen in Annual Memorial Ceremony

CIA Honors its Fallen in Annual Memorial Ceremony

May 24, 2017

On Monday, the Central Intelligence Agency held its annual memorial ceremony to pay tribute to the men and women of CIA who have died in the line of duty – courageous Americans who made the ultimate sacrifice for their country. Eight stars were added to the Memorial Wall this year.

CIA dedicated the Memorial Wall with 31 stars in 1974 to honor those who had fallen since the Agency's founding in 1947. There are now 125 stars on the wall.

Three of the stars added on Monday pay tribute to the lives of David W. Bevan, Darrell A. Eubanks, and John S. Lewis. They came to the Agency by way of the Smokejumpers – brave firefighters who parachute into remote areas to combat wildfires. CIA has benefited from the service of many former Smokejumpers, including for its Air America program. All three men died when their plane crashed while carrying out a mission in Laos in 1961.

A fourth star was added to honor Mark S. Rausenberger, an Agency officer of eighteen years, who died while serving overseas. The circumstances of his death remain classified.

The names of the other four individuals honored with newly-carved stars this year remain classified.

In his remarks to those assembled before the Memorial Wall, Director Pompeo said, "there are now 125 stars on our Memorial Wall, each representing a life that is dear to us, and will be for all time. We remain forever devoted to them, as they were to us. And we will strive to make them proud of us, as we are of them."

During the ceremony, Director Pompeo presented the families of the fallen officers with a marble replica of their loved one's star.

This year marks the 30th annual memorial ceremony (/news-information/featured-story-archive/2017-featured-story-archive/30-years-of-remembrance.html). The ceremony began in 1987 and is attended each year by hundreds of employees, retirees, and family members of those who died in service with the CIA.

###



David W. Bevan (MSO-55)

Photo Courtesy: T.J. Thompson



Darrell A. Eubanks (IDC-54)

Photos Courtesy: Leah Hessel



John S. Lewis (MYC-53)

Layout Design: Johnny Kirkley (CJ-64)

CIA Honors Three Former Smokejumpers

by Ken Hessel (McCall '58)

On May 22, 2017, the names/stars of three former Smokejumpers were added to the CIA's "Wall of Honor." The "Wall" honors Agency employees who have died in the line of duty. Since the birth of the CIA in 1947, 125 stars, including the following three smokejumpers, have been etched in the marble wall, which is located in the main entrance of the Agency HQ at Langley, Virginia.

On August 13, 1961, almost 56 years ago, **John Lewis** (MYC-53) and **Darrell Eubanks** (IDC-54), both from Lampasas, Texas, and **Dave Bevan** (MSO-55), from Mineral, WA, were killed in a plane crash while attempting to resupply General Vang Pao's anti-communist Hmong army in northern Laos. This tragedy stunned the smokejumper community, devastated the small town of Lampasas, and shocked the entire state of Texas as a result of the major Texas newspapers picking up and publishing the story. The impact on the Agency was no less earthshaking as they had lost three of their finest, and as a result of the news coverage, the Secret War in Laos was secret no more.

Having known and worked with both John and Darrell as a member of the McCall smokejumper crew (58-62), having been a 12-year CIA employee (63-75), and having married John's sister, Leah, in 1965, I'm probably as close as you'll get to finding someone that can tell you a little about their lives.

John was born 6/10/36, Darrell 8/28/36 – both in Lampasas, Texas. Both graduated from Lampasas High School in 1954 and were very talented athletes. John became a smokejumper in 1953, Darrell in 1954. John lacked three credit hours from graduating from the University of Texas. Darrell attended Southwest State Teachers College at San Marcos, Texas, before enrolling at Willamette Law School in Salem, Oregon. Both worked as direct hire PDOs (Parachute Drop Officers) for the CIA and were recruited from the McCall smokejumper unit. John and Darrell were both crewmembers on

several night missions into Tibet to drop indigenous teams of men, arms, and ammunition to support Tibetan guerrilla fighters in their struggle against invading Chinese troops. Interspersed with the Tibetan missions were the missions into Laos to support General Vang Pao's guerrilla army.

In addition, John participated in the preparation for and in the assault at the Bay of Pigs in Cuba in April 1961. In 1974, for his actions in this operation, the Cuban Veterans of the 2506 Assault Brigade posthumously awarded John a medal for valor. Legendary pilot Connie Seigrist, who also was decorated by the Brigade, delivered the medal to John's mother in Austin, Texas. In 2002, the CIA posthumously awarded John the CIA's medal for valor in recognition of his exceptional support to the CIA in April of 1961 – the Bay of Pigs operation. A CIA emissary presented the medal to John's sister (my wife, Leah) at a gathering of family and friends in LaGrande, Oregon, on November 8, 2002.

Finally, on May 22, 2017, the CIA brought closure to the Lewis, Eubanks, and Bevan families by dedicating three stars on the Agency's "Wall of Honor" – one for John S. Lewis, one for Darrell A. Eubanks, and one for Dave W Bevan. Agency Director Mike Pompeo presented a marble duplicate of the etched star and a CIA medallion "for exceptional service" to the Bevan family, represented by two of Dave's sisters, Margie Shouman and Kathleen Sallee. Director Pompeo also presented these same treasured mementos to the Eubanks and Lewis families. The Eubanks family was represented by two of Darrell's cousins, and sisters Leah Lewis Hessel and Susan Lewis Steele represented the Lewis family.

As the foregoing account attests to, the Agency may be slow in matters of proper recognition, but they usually get it right in the end. John, Darrell and Dave will justly and forever be remembered for their ultimate sacrifices. Their stars on the Wall of Honor finally completes their life stories for those who knew and loved them.

For those so inclined, Googling the “CIA Wall of Honor” will provide a lot of information about the wall, including most of the names thereon. For security reasons, some names are not listed in the “Book of Honor” which resides on a pedestal at the base of the wall. Though some must remain anonymous, each patriot is represented on the wall by his/her own star.

Also attending the ceremony were **T.J. Thompson** (MSO-55), **Jack Cahill** (MSO-58), **Mike Oehlrich** (MSO-60), **Roland “Andy” Andersen** (GAC-

52), and **Pete Hoirup** (MSO-55). The wives of T.J., Jack and Pete were also in attendance. 🕯

Dave Bevan jumped out of Missoula 55-58 and Fairbanks 59-60. He was also involved in paratrooper training for the Bay of Pigs Operation in 1961. He attended Washington State University and graduated from Western New Mexico University in Silver City.

There is a star on the Wall of Honor for a fourth smokejumper whose name cannot be released at this time. (Ed.)

They Were Smokejumpers When The CIA Sent Them To Laos; They Came Back In Caskets

by Ian Shapira

(Copyright 2017, The Washington Post)

Their families didn’t know they were in Laos, and didn’t know that they’d started working for the Central Intelligence Agency in addition to their jobs with the U.S. Forest Service.

They were young firefighters-turned-CIA operatives working thousands of miles from home in a remote corner of Southeast Asia. **David W. Bevan** (MSO-55), **Darrell A. Eubanks** (IDC-54) and **John S. Lewis** (MYC-53), all in their mid-20s, were on a mission to drop supplies for anti-communist forces in what was then known as the Kingdom of Laos. But on Aug. 13, 1961, the CIA-operated Air America plane carrying the men tried turning out of a mountaintop bowl near the Laotian capital of Vientiane and one of its wings hooked into a ridge.

The C-46 “cartwheeled into little pieces,” according to the book, *Smokejumpers and the CIA*, published by the National Smokejumper Association. The CIA operatives died, along with Air America’s two pilots.

When their families were told they’d been killed in Laos in a plane crash, they were stunned.

“No one even knew where Laos was,” said Leah Hessel, 79, one of Lewis’ younger sisters who had dated Eubanks in high school. “My parents never quite recovered from it. It was earth-shattering.”

It took a week, she said, “for the bodies to come back. I can remember sitting in the living room, and over the hills, you could see in the far distance the lights of the train, coming into town with the caskets.”

Though the U.S. involvement in Laos was later cloaked in secrecy, their deaths were not hidden. Newspapers ran tiny wire stories about the crash, which, according to *Smokejumpers and the CIA*, made the men among the first Americans killed in the Laotian theater of the Vietnam War.

But it took 56 years for the CIA to publicly honor the deaths of the three CIA operatives. Last month a marble star for each was carved into the agency’s iconic Memorial Wall, which pays tribute to the men and women who died in the line of duty. The wall now features 125 stars, though the identities of some remain classified.

In a statement, CIA spokeswoman Heather Fritz Horniak said the agency is proud to recog-

nize “the heroic sacrifices” of the three operatives. “The passage of time neither dilutes their valor, nor reduces the immeasurable debt we owe them,” she said.

Their stars highlight the little-known roles of dozens of smokejumpers—men who normally parachuted out of airplanes fighting U.S. forest fires, but who were tapped by the CIA to drop food and ammunition for anti-communist forces in Southeast Asia.

By the late 1950s, the agency was increasing the number of airdrops to remote posts for the Royal Lao Army, according to an article on the CIA website written by William M. Leary, a University of Georgia history professor and Air America expert. The CIA-led “secret war” in Laos began brewing more intensely by the early 1960s and lasted through the mid-1970s, according to Joshua Kurlantzick, whose book on the conflict, *A Great Place To Have a War*, was published in January.

Two of the three men who died in Laos, Lewis and Eubanks, were best friends from the same Texas town of Lampasas, south of Dallas. They both played football for Lampasas High School, according to their relatives.

After high school, they spent their summers as smokejumpers out west, where the CIA was quietly recruiting men who were experts at handling parachutes.

“[The] CIA specifically invited/recruited smokejumpers into the covert operations business for several reasons: 1) We were damned good-looking. 2) We didn’t get airsick. ... 6) We were not active duty military, so our direct involvement in an affair of arms didn’t constitute an official act of war. ... 9) We were deniable. ... 10) Did I mention that we were damned good looking?” wrote **Don Courtney** (MSO-56) in *Smokejumpers and the CIA*.

Between the 1950s and 1970s, the agency hired more than 100 smokejumpers. Many worked as “kickers,” dropping supplies in remote parts of Laos and Tibet, according to *Smokejumpers and the CIA*. The kickers bundled food, ammunition and other supplies onto wooden or steel pallets, and strapped them to parachutes. To make the drops, the pilots nosed upward, while the kickers shoved the bundles out the door or off

the ramp, their parachutes guiding them safely to designated drop zones.

Hessel, who married a smokejumper, had been hoping for a CIA star for her brother for years. And so were other people. Leary, the University of Georgia history professor and Air America expert, wrote the CIA a letter urging the agency to give the three men Memorial Wall recognition as far back as 1993.

“From a historian’s point of view, at least, there does not appear to be any good reason why this should not be done. I hope that you will give this matter your consideration,” Leary wrote to David Gries at the CIA’s Center for the Study of Intelligence, according to the men’s letters that Hessel provided to The Washington Post.

“The suggestion you make ... is worth pursuing,” Gries wrote back. “I am contacting the appropriate people and hope to have an answer for you.”

Leary died in 2006; Gries, now in his 80s, said he doesn’t remember the discussion.

Relatives of the three men said the CIA called them out of the blue earlier this year and invited them to an annual ceremony May 22. The agency said the men would be receiving stars on the Memorial Wall and calligraphied inscriptions in the adjacent Book of Honor.

“We couldn’t believe after 56 years, something like this was going to happen,” said Kathleen Sallee, 70, Bevan’s younger sister, a retired medical technologist who lives in Washington state about 100 miles away from the town where she and her brother grew up. “Why now? I was told that someone at the agency felt for years that they should be recognized, so he collected the research to satisfy the criteria they should get the award.”

The CIA is making an effort to honor those who died in the agency’s earlier years. Just last year, four people who died in the 1950s and 1960s had stars carved into the wall.

When the families attended the ceremony, they bonded over their ties to the plane crash, and the heroism of their loved ones. They also got to meet CIA director Mike Pompeo in his office on the seventh floor.

“He wanted to know about Darrell, and I told him that I felt like Darrell didn’t regret what he

did," said Margaret Sargent, 68, a second cousin to Eubanks who lives in Arlington, Texas. "I felt an emotion during the ceremony from the people around me. They really revered this kind of sacrifice."

One former smokejumper from Montana, Mike Oehlerich (MSO-60), 77, believes he and his crewmates should have been on that flight. The way he remembers it, Oehlerich and his two colleagues had been in Bangkok for a short break. But they were out getting lunch, and accidentally missed their pickup at a hotel for a ride to the airport. They got stuck in Bangkok and so another crew—Bevan, Eubanks, and Lewis—flew that mission August 13, 1961.

"We had no idea anything happened until we got back the next day, and that's when they told us that they went into a canyon and tried to turn around and got into bad air," he said.

He said that CIA officials told him days after the crash that Lewis had jumped out of the plane,

rather than remain inside.

"When they told me that, I teared up," Oehlerich recalled. "It was something John and I had talked about—'Don't go down with the airplane. Your chances are better if you get out.'" 🕒

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To switch from receiving the print version of the magazine, contact editor Chuck Sheley (CJ-59) at cnkgsheley@earthlink.net. 🕒





Historic photo. 1954 Cave Junction Crew (Courtesy Jimmie Dollard)

Dave Laws

by Tommy Albert (Cave Junction '64)

David wasn't tall, 5' 6", but packaged in that small physique was one heck of a man. He didn't talk much, mostly minded his own business, but was undeniably set in his ways. Thusly, Dave didn't always go with the "flow."

Dave jumped for seven years and earned quite a reputation both on and off the job. Let me set the stage. After serving three years in the military (he joined the Army at age 17), Dave enrolled in Portland State under the GI Bill. While there, he joined the wrestling team. His collegiate wrestling career was not the run of the mill experience. Portland State had one of the top wrestling teams nationally. During the time Dave was there, a world-class wrestler was on the team, a local Portland boy by the name of Rick Sanders. Sanders accumulated 4 NCAA individual championships, became the first American ever to win a World Championship, earned Silver Medals in the 1968 and 1972 Olympics. Guess who his workout partner was, David Laws.

Like many of us, Dave started jumping while attending college. He rookied at Redmond in 1966, and they quickly saw that his physical prowess far exceeded the requirements. Every base has their "runners" and what job do they assign them to? You guessed it, running the rookies. Dave was not an exception and his name is folklore amongst those he helped train.

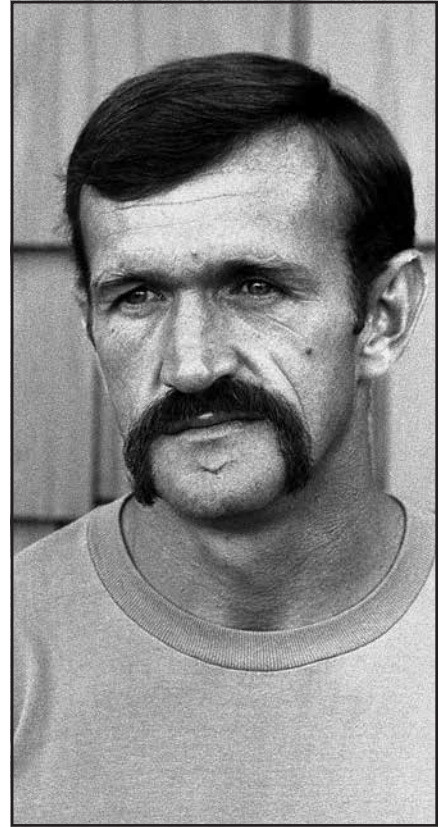
Dave would run the class until they were near exhaustion and then turn and run backwards, suggesting they had a ways to go. All of you know how fatiguing running backwards is. It simply blew their minds. Then, to top it off, Dave would light up a cigarette while running backwards. I can only imagine some of the rookies had thoughts like, "Maybe flipping burgers at McDonalds wouldn't be all that bad."

Running wasn't the end of their humiliation. Watching Dave demonstrate pull-ups and the rope climb boggled their minds. Dave could do one arm pull-ups, and his speed up the rope made them wonder how far up the evolutionary chain his ancestors made it.

He wasn't all brawn and no brain. After graduating from Portland State, Dave earned a Fulbright U.S. Scholarship for Language and Literature to study abroad and spent three years in Yugoslavia, where he met his wife, Koka, and turned the glimmer in his eye into a wonderful son, Danny.

Upon his return, he decided to try out the Gobi and became a Siskiyou Smokejumper. I mentioned his reputation on and off the job. Mind you, this is rumor but one that circulated amongst more than a few. There was a toughie, at least in his own mind, who strutted around Cave Junction with Nunchaku Sticks. You know, the martial arts weapon with two sticks joined at the top with a chain. He was a bully type. No one seems to know the details, but he apparently tried to hassle Dave one day in town and well let's say after receiving a personal lesson on the pretzel hold, was glad Dave kept his Nunchaku and he didn't have to remove it from his person. After that, every time the guy saw Dave in town, he hastily went the other way. He never replaced his Nunchaku Sticks either.

Dave took a job in the Regional Office, but being a bureaucrat didn't fit his fancy so he quit and



Dave Laws (Courtesy Doug Beck)

started a lawn service business in Portland. The business had its ups and downs, but the weight of big city life finally became too much and he started looking for a change. It so happened the Siskiyou Smokejumper Base Museum had a shortage of manpower and had the perfect place for a person to live full time. Dave accepted the offer and moved down to the base. There he used his expertise and made

the landscaping around the museum look better than it had during the whole existence of the base. And though he was a man of few words, he had a wry sense of humor and was a popular tour guide for the jumper museum, often requested by guests who had talked to people who previously took his tour. Dave passed at the Gobi on July 6, 2017, and will be direly missed. 🕯



ODDS AND ENDS



by Chuck Sheley

Jack Price (IDC-50): "I enjoyed the book *Smokejumpers And The CIA*. I jumped at McCall and Idaho City and knew "Paperlegs" Peterson, who was one of the best of storytellers. He always had an audience listening to his stories. Keep the good stories coming."

Karen (Weissenback) Moen: "Hi Chuck: I was just back in Washington attending the National League of POW/MIA's Annual Meeting—I returned home this afternoon. This year, finally we received very good news, and it looks like (unless something goes drastically wrong) the crash site of Air America #293 will be excavated for remains in the next few months. After so many years of disappointment, it is difficult to be entirely optimistic. However, I do think that by going to the site myself, along with the son of the pilot, we embarrassed 'the boys' into finally agreeing that 'yes, they could get there and no, it wasn't too difficult.' I will, of course, keep you posted. The site survey should be done in July, talks with the Lao government in August, and a team deployed from Honolulu for 45 days on October 20 with another 30 days budgeted in January, if needed. It's pretty darn specific this time, so hopefully it is happening. The Vice-Chair of the Joint Chiefs of Staff has taken a personal interest in the case along with a couple of other folks."

Ed Weissenback (RAC-64) was shot down on Dec.



27, 1971, in an Air America C-123 near the Chinese border. (Ed.)

Marty Meierotto (FBX-94) is becoming a fan favorite on the History Channel show "Mountain Men,"

Thursdays 9/8 CST. Current websites describe the program: "The Mountain

Men Reality Show is now in it's fourth successful season on The History Channel because of the authenticity of the cast members. The Mountain Men featured in this real life Reality Show not only show how they survive, but thrive in the wilderness living off their land.

"Marty Meierotto is what you call a Modern Day Mountain Man/ Trapper flying a Steel Horse (Airplane) while checking his trapline 200 miles out in the middle of nowhere Alaska. Marty's been running this Alaskan trapline becoming a Reality Star on Mountain Men. Marty is the 'real deal' when it comes to a Modern Day Professional Trapper. He's written several articles in 'The Trapper & Predator Caller' prior to becoming a cast member on Mountain Men. Marty and his wife, Dominique, and daughter, Noah, live in Two Rivers, Alaska.

A description of upcoming programs from another site: "Last year, Marty was sidelined early when his main line stopped producing fur. He was forced to start over and blaze an entirely new trail in Alaska's Revelation Mountains. This season, he heads back to the mountains with

long term plans. He heads out early to prepare for trapping and begin construction on a log cabin that will support a larger operation and possibly house his family for a visit. But extreme shifts in warming and cooling wreak havoc on his ambitious goals.”

Marty jumped at Fairbanks 1994, 1999-2010, 2012-14.

From “**Wildfire Today**”: Fifteen trainees were successful graduates of the rookie smokejumper training that recently concluded in Missoula, Montana. The Missoula base will claim nine, Grangeville Idaho gets five, and West Yellowstone one.

A person associated with the program told 26 started the class, which was more than they usually have.

And in related smokejumper news, last week Tory Kendrick was promoted to Base Manager in Missoula.

Another 13 jumpers from McCall, Idaho, recently finished the Ram Air Transition Training (round canopy to square canopy).

News articles and books, from time to time, write about the dropping of drift streamers during the 40s and 50s. These were the days before drift streamers and where drift chutes were used. Burlap chutes were used in the 40s and other types of drift chute in the 50s.

In a recent letter **Dan Stohr** (MSO-53) provides some interesting information: “As your article pointed out, this was before the days of streamers. The drift chutes used then (50s) had been acquired through a war surplus agency. They were originally designed as a drove chute, attached to low-flying bombers during WWII. Because of the strain exerted by their heavy cargo, they were designed of a heavy-duty material and reinforced webbing and straps. If my memory serves me right, I believe the canopy was about three feet across.

“One of our duties in the loft was to modify these chutes to conform to the rate of descent of the standard parachute. This involved cutting out one of two gores and sewing the canopy back together. They were repacked back into their canister and stored until needed.

“There must be remains of some of them still scattered in our forests. I’m sure, on some high

ridge in a very remote part of the mountains, some hiker has come across one of these strange-looking objects. As he holds up this rusted piece of metal with weathered, rotted shrouds attached, he’s probably wondering ‘what the heck is this and how did it get here?’”

On the subject of those drift chutes, **Dan Stohr** (MSO-53) related an incident from 1953: “We were returning from the Mission Range on a run that had been called off. **Jack Hughes** was piloting the Trimotor and I was riding in back with **Hal Samsel** (MSO-49) when one of the drift chutes ‘accidentally’ got kicked out over Flathead Lake.

“It would probably have gone unnoticed except that Jack Hughes, probably looking for a little diversion after a long trip, circled the chute several times as it descended. We noticed a number of boats converging on the spot and had a good laugh.

“When we landed, we learned that the press had been alerted to a mysterious parachute descending on Flathead Lake. I never had to confront **Fred Brauer** (MSO-41), but the spotter had to do some fast talking. Jack Hughes came to our defense saying the chute was dislodged during some turbulence.”

Over a year ago the grandson of **Harold Hartman** (CJ-65) was seriously injured in a farming accident resulting in paralysis of the lower half of his body. The NSA Good Samaritan Fund responded with funds to help with making changes to the household to accommodate a wheelchair.

To the membership from the Hartman’s: “We can’t express in words how much your (NSA) generous giving meant to us and Connor. We appreciate from the bottom of our hearts and want to extend thanks to the Smokejumper Association. You truly are heroes.”

Lonny Oswalt (CJ-65) passed along that his brother, **David** (CJ-68), was seriously injured in a fall (July) at his home in Portland. David is currently in a rehabilitation facility. Cards and letters of encouragement would be appreciated. Since it will be October before you will be reading this column, please address them to Lonny at 5137 NE Wistaria, Portland, OR, 97213. He will get them to David. 🙏

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This outstanding shirt features stylized "SMOKEJUMPERS" on the front with fabulous artwork of jumping action on back. Hazy light blue (M, L, XL, XXL) with short sleeves. **\$14**



Movie inspired many dreams of smokejumping for young men

Loosely based on the Mann Gulch Fire in which 12 jumpers and a firefighter died, "**Red Skies of Montana**" was released in 1952. Starring Richard Widmark. **\$15**



Exhaustive DVD tells the story of smokejumping from beginning

"**Smokejumpers: Firefighters From the Sky**" is a definitive record of smokejumping, featuring 120 minutes of history from 1939 to 2000. Interviews with many former jumpers. **\$10**

Jumpers Trust Jumpers

by Bob Shackelford (Missoula '52)

Paul Wilson (MSO-50) had just moved from fire control officer on the Avery District to forest dispatcher in St. Maries in 1963. On July 23, the first day at Avery for new District Ranger Bob Brown, there was a lightning storm with some 43 fires reported on the Avery District.

A light shower helped, but several fires had potential to move when the sun dried out fuels. The district was immediately out of smoke chasers, and knowing the big storm was still pounding east into the Bitterroot and south into the Clearwater, the Joe was in desperate straits.

Waiting would mean the Missoula jumpers would all be dispatched, so the district called Paul for a Doug load of jumpers.

There wasn't time to sort out individual fires and get a fire figured for each pair or more. Besides, the situation would certainly change within an hour or two. Some smokes would lay down, some new ones would pop up. One thing was for sure – there were plenty of fires for all.

Paul said he would try to get a planeload in the air – all the jumpers he could get. The district said it had plenty of fires between the Idaho state line and Round Top Work Center, south of the river.

Wilson evidently beat the Bitterroot and Clear-

water requests by a few, and Missoula filled and sent the Doug, trusting the spotter, Wilson, and the district to make it all work. The largest fire on Avery, from this bust, turned out to be 10 acres and jumpers got a line around it.

Most of the Doug-load of 16 jumpers went out two by two on very visible smokes.

The next few days, district people found jumpers and gear scattered on roads all over the south side. The jumpers were taken to Avery and told to wait for a bus that would be coming upriver from St. Maries.

Jumpers were very enterprising on getting back to Missoula for the next jump. They talked a Hiawatha train crew to load them on for the trip to Missoula. The train crews were very helpful to firefighters in those days.

The Magruder district of the Bitterroot was also hit with some 40 starts in this same 1963 storm, and a couple of starts turned out to be project fires.

Time is often critical. I am sure, at least in these years, that there was a bit of bias at the loft for forests that would call for jumpers and take care to get the jumpers and gear back to Missoula quickly. Also a bias for forest dispatchers who were well-known jumpers with a fire history. 🔦

TERROR AT SOMETHING UNDER TEN THOUSAND FEET

by Bill Cherry (Missoula '47)

From "And There We Were," produced by the McCall 60th Anniversary Reunion Committee.

Smokejumping started out as an occupation with at least a small amount of dignity involved. Well, let me

tell you how all of the dignity went out of the profession for me.

The year was 1950, the season was spring and, as I recall, it was a pretty nice spring up to the time of my story. The training was going well, the rookies'

complaints about the physical exertion pretty normal, and the packs seemed fairly light for 160 pounds. For the most part, things just couldn't be better.

Little did I know that my entire spring was about to be completely uprooted by, of all

things, a female freelance writer who claimed to be working on a story for *National Geographic*.

We were in McCall, Idaho, for our annual spring training, which was going quite well. One day I noticed a lady wandering around the compound, interrogating individuals like an FBI agent assigned to the Oklahoma City Bombing case.

I really never gave her a second glance because, other than the fact she didn't deserve one, she didn't appear to pose any threat. How wrong can one be?

It did not take long before she came over to our group for a bit of interrogation. At that time she revealed her identity as a freelance writer who was going to do an article on the smokejumpers.

Although she was considerably less than attractive – being of the advanced age of 30-something, and could certainly be classified as “queen size” – the thought of our being in *National Geographic* was indeed enticing.

We began to wonder what kind of an article she was working on when the questions started getting into things like marital status, steady girlfriends, last date, “Do you like to dance real close?” etc. I don't believe she got the answers she was looking for because she left rather quickly and headed over to Johnson Flying Service. I viewed her departure as good riddance, never imagining she would soon come back to haunt me.

The next day we were preparing for a training jump, and who comes walking out to the plane but the lady writer on the arm of a Johnson pilot. Those guys never did have much taste

in women, or their eyesight was considerably less than the minimum required by FAA.

She was dressed in a rather low-cut blouse and a pair of pants so tight that from behind it looked like two pigs fighting in a feed sack. As she passed by, she announced she was going to sit in the co-pilot's seat and watch how this operation was run.

I was the spotter for that day's jump and, after a smooth flight to the jumpsite, I took up my position in the doorway with the drift chute in hand.

Our first pass was a little off and we had to make a couple of hard turns to get back on line for the second attempt. We were right on the money on the second trip. I dropped the drift chute and was leaning out the door, watching it, as it made its way down.

I believe our pilot buddy was trying to impress his co-pilot because he made several turns and altitude changes we had never made before, and all of them seemed to be made rather violently. He finally got the Ford Trimotor lined up with the chute sitting out in the meadow, and I was concentrating on it when suddenly something hit me full in the face.

At that point, all I knew was it had splattered all over me from the chest up. At first I thought maybe we were flying second in formation with an elephant who had diarrhea; a more careful examination (actually smell and taste) revealed the foreign substance was NOTHING LESS THAN PUKE!

Seems the radical maneuvering made our freelance writer a

bit sick. The pilot didn't want the mess in the cockpit with him, so he told her to open the window and stick her head out. Yeah, you guessed it – smacked right in the kisser by a bucketful of vomit.

Remember my telling you about her size? It became more obvious as to why, since I got an up close and personal look at her lunch.

As we all know, there was nothing in those old planes with which to clean yourself, so I popped an emergency chute and tried that. Unfortunately, it was made out of nylon and didn't absorb, so it just smeared around. I had to sit with that stuff all over me until we got the plane back to the airport.

I don't believe I waited for the plane to complete its rollout before I hopped out and headed for the closest source of water I could find. It took nearly two weeks of scrubbing before I was able to say I could no longer smell or taste it.

Back to the dignity thing. I really thought my comrades would comprehend the magnitude of this tragedy and feel sympathetic. Yeah, right! However, I will say they refrained from further jests at my expense when, a short time later, I fell from the jump tower and suffered a serious injury, thereby terminating my smokejumping career.

I have subscribed to *National Geographic* for the past 48 years, eagerly waiting to read that story – but to no avail. Nevertheless, I am confident it will appear in the forthcoming July 1998 issue. 🍄

Bill passed away March 2012 (Ed.)

BLAST FROM THE PAST

by Jack Demmons

(Missoula '50)

The Daily Missoulian

June 9, 1944

Seven Volunteer To Make Jumps

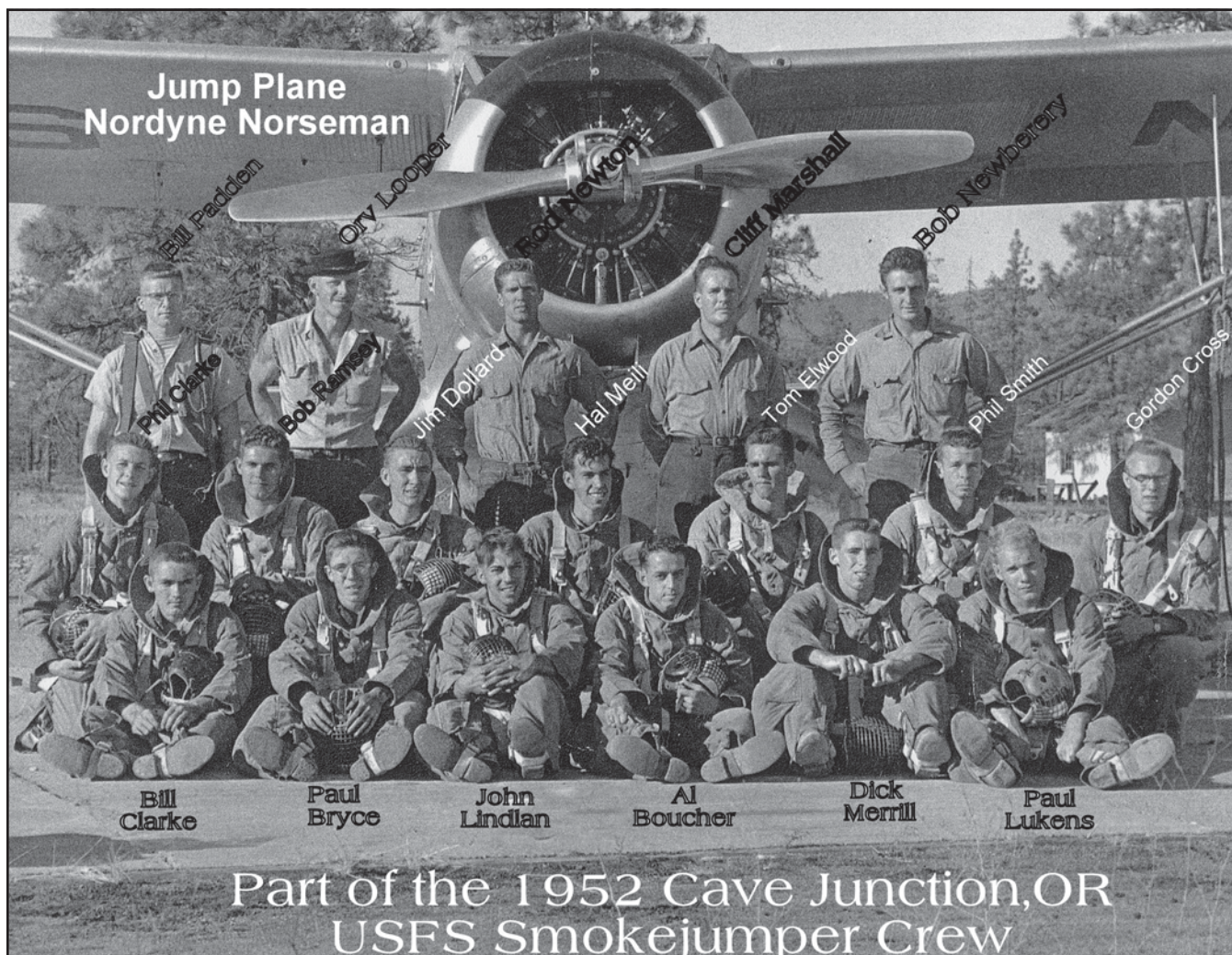
SEVEN REGULAR FOREST Service parachute jumpers have volunteered to attempt to land on Dornbazer Field at Montana State University Sunday afternoon during the ceremonies being held to open the Fifth War Loan campaign.



Tricky air currents coming out of Hell Gate Canyon, together with uncertain drafts near the

mountains, will make it difficult to guarantee that the men will land directly on the field. It is believed, however, that if weather conditions are calm, that it can be done as the men who will jump have had experience landing on forest fires in the back country of our mountains.

Volunteers who have agreed to make the jump are Jim Waite, Earl Cooley, Art Cochran, James Jackson, Carl Schmidt, Wag Dodge and Glenn Smith. 🧠



Historic Photo 1952 Cave Junction Crew (Phil Clarke collection)