FOREWORD

This information is a tribute to the more than 6,000 men and women who have served our nation as smokejumpers since the start of the program in 1939.

These are the accounts of the lives and deaths of the 32 smokejumpers who have been killed in the line of duty. Read their stories. You'll nd they were no more heroic or foolhardy than those of us who have also worked the "best job in the world" and survived.

These jumpers were simply doing their jobs when their luck ran out. If you are a jumper, you will identify with many of them.

If you have corrections or additions, please contact Chuck Sheley at cnkgsheley@earthlink.net.

THE JUMPERS AND THEIR STORIES

Malvin L. Brown (Pendleton '45) – Aug. 6, 1945

Twenty-two-year-old Malvin L. Brown walked into a Philadelphia Army recruiting station Oct. 11, 1942, and signed up. At that time he had a grammar school education, a job driving trucks, and a girlfriend.

After completing Army basic training, Brown heard about an all-volunteer African American paratrooper unit. Recruits voluntarily transferring from other Army units were filling the group's ranks. Brown met the requirements for entry, volunteered, and was accepted by the newly formed 555th Parachute Infantry Battalion.

He took his paratrooper training, and later medical technician training, at Fort Benning, Ga. Orders were issued May 5, 1945, for the 555th to report to their new permanent duty station at Pendleton, Ore.

A call came in to Pendleton Monday, Aug. 6, 1945, for military smokejumpers. Their mission would take them southwest across Oregon for nearly 150 miles to the Umpqua National Forest. Ten jumpers, including Brown, would jump the fire located near Lemon Butte, 38 miles northeast of Roseburg. It was burning in the tall timber of western Oregon where 200-foot-tall trees are common.

No one knows for sure what went wrong, but at 5 p.m. Brown began to slide down his rope after landing in one of these tall trees. He somehow lost his hold on the rope. Reports say he fell approximately 150 feet into a rocky creekbed far below.

Death was believed to be instantaneous; the cause of death was officially listed as basal skull fracture and cerebral hemorrhage.

That night and the next day, Brown's body was carried out to a road more than 15 miles away by his fellow paratroopers, arriving at 7 a.m. on the second day. Four days later his remains arrived by train in

Narberth, Pa., and were turned over to his new wife, Edna, whom he had married after entering the Army.

In recognition of the men who parachuted to the Lemon Butte Fire in 1945, the Umpqua National Forest named an overlook – where some forest employees watched the jump – "Fireman's Leap."

Brown was born Oct. 7, 1920, in Baltimore, the fifth child of Steve and Ethel Brown. He was 24 years, nine months and 29 days old when he died.

Private First Class Malvin L. Brown is listed as the first smokejumper to perish in the line of duty. You can find more information about Malvin Brown and Operation Firefly in Smokejumper magazine: "The Search For Malvin L. Brown's Grave" by Fred Donner, October 2014, page 6, and "Operation Firefly – Myth, Fact, Common Sense" by Chuck Sheley, April 2015, page 28.

Lester Lycklama (McCall '46) – July 4, 1946

From the recollections of **John Ferguson** (MYC-43) and **Wayne R. Webb** (MYC-46), both McCall jumpers now deceased:

Payette National Forest fire dispatcher Harold "Slim" Vassar received a lookout's report July 3, 1946, of a small lightning fire on Fall Creek Ridge, near the Middle Fork of the Weiser River. Vassar discussed initial attack procedure with Fire Control Officer Glenn Thompson. They agreed the fire was in a remote area and **Stewart "Lloyd" Johnson** (MYC-43) and **John P. Ferguson** (MYC-43) decided the fire was a smokejumper assignment.

Among the jumpers on call that day were Lester Lycklama, **John L. Hennessey** (MYC-46) and **Coston T. Aguirre** (MYC-46). They were dispatched to the fire, along with spotter Lloyd Johnson, pilot Bob Fogg, and John Ferguson, who assisted on the fire run.

The fire was clearly visible from the air. Following a pass around the area, a landing spot close to the fire was selected and a drift chute dropped to check wind direction and velocity.

Johnson, who spotted the jumpers, watched them bail out and land in the spot without incident. Ferguson helped Johnson drop the cargo, and as the plane left the fire area, he saw two jumpers headed for the fire and the remaining jumper picking up the jump gear. The operation was routine in every respect.

Meanwhile, on the fire, Lycklama and Hennessey were using a crosscut saw to fell a ponderosa pine that had been struck by lightning and was burning about two-thirds of the way up the tree. Aguirre was posted up the slope to serve as lookout for possible falling tree limbs.

While they were sawing, the tree burned in two and the top third fell, almost in an upright position

Aguirre shouted a warning and the sawyers started running in their pre-selected escape routes. Lycklama tripped on a root, fell face-down and was struck on the head by a tree limb, knocking him unconscious with a severe head injury.

The incident occurred at approximately 9:30 p.m. Hennessey and Aguirre stayed with the victim until daylight, when Hennessey went for help. He traveled about eight miles cross-country to a road on the Middle Fork of the Weiser River. He had started downriver when a passing motorist stopped at his urgent plea and drove him to Council, Idaho. He found a phone and called the forest dispatcher in McCall.

A rescue squad jumped in and carried the injured jumper on a stretcher about four miles cross-country to a trail. They had started down to the road when they met the ground party headed by a Dr. Thurston. Johnson, Ferguson, and Aguirre continued with the group to the hospital, while Wayne Webb, **Ed Case** (MYC-46) and **Bruce Froman** (MYC-46) returned to the fire to finish putting it out and to gather the gear to await the packer, who came in the next day.

Lester Lycklama died at 5:30 a.m., July 5, 1946, on the operating table at Council Hospital, having never regained consciousness.

Robert Bennett (Missoula '49) – Aug. 5, 1949

Bob trained at Missoula in 1949. He died with 11 other Missoula smokejumpers in the Mann Gulch Fire. The portraits of Bennett below are from Some of the Men of Mann Gulch by **Starr Jenkins** (CJ-48), 1993.

From Joyce B. Russell and Gary P. Bennett: He was born March 18, 1927, and from all reports was a delight to the family. He was my older brother, the third of four children born to Robert Guy and Annie Moses Bennett of Paris, Tenn. His older siblings were Jeanne Moses Bennett (now Sharber) and Maurice Guy Bennett, now deceased.

Dr. Augustus Oliver, family physician, friend and neighbor, ushered Robert into the world and saw him through the usual childhood illnesses and one life-threatening bout with diphtheria when he was four.

Bob was a good brother, son and human being, one of those rare people who truly cared about others and exhibited excellent character traits throughout life. He attended Sunday school and worship services, joining the First Christian Church in Paris.

He completed elementary school in the same town, and we chased lightning bugs, wove clover chains, played Hide and Seek, Red Rover, tag, and other childhood games. When I climbed the gnarly apple tree in our back yard and panic struck, it was Bob's steady hand that guided me safely to the ground again. Bob did most of the things boys did then. He had a paper route, built and ew kites, made model airplanes, and experimented with chemistry and wood burning sets. Lest anyone polish a premature halo for him, however, he also started a grass fire near the garage, experimenting with matches and frightening our mother to near hysterics.

His mind was curious but never vicious. He dropped a tiny piece of tobacco into my sister's eye once to see what would happen and was shocked when she reacted so quickly and so loudly. Another time, he called to me (in that same back yard), "Stop or I'll shoot!"

I blithely kept running, never believing for a minute that my older brother, my guide and protector, would

actually do such a thing with his new BB gun. But temptation overcame him.

When the BB struck my back, not even penetrating my clothing, I howled mightily, sure that I was mortally wounded. He was properly contrite because this aberration had been a rare exception to his kind and generous nature.

Bob's interest in the outdoors was always there. He played football in high school as a center and worked hard and consistently. It was about this time that a classmate of his who had a crush on him made friends with me in order to visit our home. She was a sweet, honest girl who told me of her infatuation and we remained friends. She visited our home after Bob died and grieved with us.

Bob was reserved and had a quiet strength of character. He was an honorable person with a good sense of humor. He was not preachy or "better-than-thou," but was a fine young man.

Just after graduating from high school, Bob joined the Army, on May 31, 1945. He was a member of the 29th General Medical Corps stationed with the occupation forces in Japan. While serving also in Korea, he attained the rank of staff sergeant and was honorably discharged from the Army Dec. 25, 1946.

After his service, using the GI Bill, he enrolled in the University of Montana because of its reputation for having a fine forestry program. The study of forestry had been his goal since childhood. His letters from Montana told us of his life there, his introduction to the ski slopes and friends he had met.

One was **Leonard Piper** (MSO-49), who died with him at Mann Gulch. Bob was looking forward to his junior year at the university and knew his smokejumper's pay would help.

This, of course, was not to be. Mann Gulch, Aug. 5, 1949, happened instead. Bob will always be an excellent man in my memory and an important part of my past to be cherished.

From Barbara Bigham Simons: Robert Bennett was my schoolmate for as far back as I can remember. Because our last names both began with B, we always sat close together in class. I can't say that he dunked my pigtails in the inkwell because I neither had pigtails nor was he inclined to do such things. He was intelligent, studious, quiet and unassuming, very courteous, pleasant and well-liked by everyone.

By the time we were in high school we were calling him Bob rather than Robert. I always felt that he would do well in anything that he undertook. However, I never imagined that Bob would aspire to such a dangerous career as being a re ghter in the Forest Service. He gave his life courageously while serving his country. I'm proud to have counted him a good friend.

From Ms. Bobbie Parker: We lived across the street from the Bennett family from about 1943 on. Joyce and I became fast friends and are to this day. I remember Robert as a quiet, shy boy with a sweet smile, well-liked by all who knew him.

I will never forget hearing on the radio of the danger of the forest fire in Montana and seeing Mrs.

Bennett's worry. Then I remember the flag-draped casket being carried up the porch steps to the front hall of the Bennett home. We knew we had all lost a good man and a good friend then.

Mrs. Lucille Long: Bob Bennett, my brother-in-law, was a kind, thoughtful young man. When Pearl Harbor was bombed, my planned marriage to Bob's brother Maurice (who was in the Navy) was delayed three years because of the war.

Robert and all the Bennetts were very kind to me. I visited their home often, as I was very lonely. I worked at the Paris 5 & 10 Cents Store. Robert would come to Fry's Drug Store and have a Coke with me at the soda fountain while I ate my lunch. He was a polite, good-looking boy with a kind smile, and he was dearly loved by all his family and me.

I can remember his mother, who was in ill health at the time, hearing on the radio about the forest fire, and being so worried about Robert. Then later, the Western Union boy knocked at the door.

We all knew then. His father called the family doctor before they read the message to her. The whole town of Paris, Tenn., was saddened by her loss.

Bob Sallee's letter to Bob Bennett's mother, Mrs. Annie Bennett: I'm glad you have written to me, as I have been wanting to tell you about Bob. The smokejumpers are some of the best fellows in the world and your son was one of the best-liked men in camp. Several of the fellows came to me after I came back from that fire and asked if Bob had been along. I shall never forget the look of shock and pain on their faces when I told them that he had.

Of the men who died at Mann Gulch, Bob was the only one who showed any sign of using his head and thinking out a way or method that might have meant survival for him. He took refuge in an open spot where there was nothing but grass.

There he laid face down and gambled that the flames would go through the grass so fast that he would not burn. But God had decided it was Bob's time to come. He died without suffering because there is no pain from a hemorrhage of the lungs.

Your son is a hero. All men who die protecting something they love are heroes. Bob loved the forests very much. He died in a war that is as great as any other war ever fought on this earth. The war man fights against the eternal enemy of the forest – fire.

Your pastor is right. Bob lives. He lives in the hearts of every man, woman and child that loves the forests.

Eldon E. Diettert (Missoula '49) – Aug. 5, 1949

Eldon trained in Missoula in 1949 and died with 11 other Missoula jumpers in the Mann Gulch Fire. An honor roll Forestry student at the University of Montana, he'd been called away from his 19th birthday luncheon to go to the fire.

The following is from *Some of the Men of Mann Gulch,* Starr Jenkins, 1993:

This account of Eldon's life was written by his brother, Gerald A. Diettert, M.D.: Eldon was born Aug. 5, 1930, in Moscow, Idaho, the second son of Reuben and Charlotte Diettert. His father was an assistant professor in Botany at the University of Idaho; his mother, a housewife.

Eldon was the only one in the family who had naturally curly hair and mother allowed it to grow without cutting until it was shoulder length (about like Shirley Temple's).

Frequently the mailman would tease Eldon about this, calling him a "little girl." One day when Eldon was about three, following such taunting, he kicked the man in the shins and proclaimed, "I'm not a little girl."

When he was four, I took him to the Saturday morning movie series, "Buster Brown and his Dog," several times. Eldon always cried because he was afraid of "the dog" and had to be returned home, much to my disgust.

When Eldon was five, the family moved to Iowa City, Iowa, where his father returned to school to obtain his Ph.D. in Botany. During this time, the family lived in several apartments. While father was in school, mother did custodial work at the School of Dentistry. Father did his doctoral thesis on sagebrush and engaged his two sons in sanding and polishing sections of sagebrush for his project.

The family spent their summers on Grandfather Diettert's farm near North Judson, Ind., where grandmother tried to fatten the brothers on cream and whole milk and gave them chickens to raise, then served them the birds at dinner before their departure for home at summer's end. Some time was also spent on Grandfather Thompson's farm near Lafayette, Ind.

Two years later, in 1937, the family moved to Missoula, Mont., where father became a member and subsequently chairman of the Botany Department at the University of Montana. Soon after this move, both brothers obtained magazine routes, selling such periodicals as Liberty, True Confessions and True Detective. Eldon continued his route (actually an area of town considered to be his "property" to solicit for customers) throughout grade school and was very conscientious and punctual with his customers. Some of the money earned went to supplement the family income, but part was saved "for college."

At Paxson Elementary School, Eldon was an excellent student and received high marks. He was well liked by his teachers and fellow students. In contrast to his brother, who was three years older and very protective of him, he never got into any fights.

He was a member of Cub Scout Pack 1, Den 2 but did not continue in the Boy Scout program. He participated in a music program at the university, learning to play the clarinet. During summers, the family picked huckleberries to supplement their income.

Another adventure in the woods occurred when he was about nine. He and his brother climbed about 2,000 feet to a saddle in Mount Sentinel just east of the campus and cut down a Christmas tree that

measured about 4 inches through at the butt. The top 15 feet was carried home where father shortened it again so it would fit into the house.

Eldon liked to build model airplanes powered by rubber bands, and after they had crashed and been repaired repeatedly, they were set on fire and launched from the second-story bedroom window to "go down in flames." Luckily the house did not burn down from these aerial funeral pyres.

Eldon's sister, Doris Jean, was born in 1939. Over the next 10 years, Eldon became her chief protector, looking after her every need and taking her to movies and other local events.

During the summers at age nine and ten, Eldon helped me mow and water neighborhood lawns. Sometimes the grass was so tall Eldon pulled on a rope tied to the mower while I pushed. Eldon took over the lawn jobs on his own when 11 and 12.

Following this, he worked intermittently after school and summers at the K&W Grocery Store, delivering groceries and stocking shelves. He was studious in high school and, though he was tall, 6-foot-3 and very strong, he did not participate in sports.

Our family took vacation trips to Glacier National Park and other camping spots. With his father's encouragement, Eldon became an avid dry-fly trout fisherman in his teens.

In the summers of 1947 and 1948 he worked for the U.S. Forest Service in the Blister Rust Control program at Camp Nowhere in northern Idaho. By the fall of 1948 he had decided that forestry would be his calling and he enrolled at the University of Montana, where he continued to be a scholar and was on the high honor roll each quarter.

Father bragged that Eldon was one of the best forestry students he had ever taught, but father was felt to be a bit prejudiced.

Eldon was very excited about and challenged by the smokejumper program and viewed it as a great opportunity in his chosen career. He was called away from his 19th birthday luncheon to go to the Mann Gulch fire.

In the fall of 1949, **Wag Dodge** (MSO-41) took me, Eldon's brother, up to Mann Gulch to view the fire scene and the site of Eldon's death. I realize now what an emotional strain that must have been on Wag. In *Young Men and Fire,* Maclean referred to a family that never spoke about their loss after the fire. I believe that was our family. In deference to my mother's grief, the fire was never discussed and one treaded lightly in even recalling episodes in his life – a real shame, and unfair to him and his goodness, and unfair to all of us in remembering and talking about his short time with us with happiness.

Eldon Diettert did not live long enough to do any noteworthy accomplishments. His story is really that of an above-average American boy growing up in the Depression years, with his great promise unful lled. One sad mistake took away his life.

David R. Navon (Missoula '49) – Aug. 5, 1949

David trained in Missoula in 1949. He died with 11 other Missoula smokejumpers in the Mann Gulch Fire.

The following is from *Some of the Men of Mann Gulch,* Starr Jenkins, 1993:

A composite of several letters by Anita Navon: My older brother, David Richard Navon, was born in 1920 in Argentina where my dad, already an American for many years, was selling farm machinery for International Harvester out of Chicago. My parents soon returned to the U.S. and bought farmland in the Central Valley of California, where we were raised. After Dad lost the farm in the Depression, in 1935, we moved to the bigger town of Modesto where David finished high school in 1938.

Seeking relief from the humdrum, David "ran away to sea," working his way around the world for a year on a Swedish freighter. He returned in 1939 and entered Modesto Junior College, soon joining the National Guard to have some work income and military training.

When President Roosevelt responded to Hitler's rampages in Europe by mobilizing the National Guard in 1941, David was taken into the Army. And the war soon came.

David made it through Officer Candidate School in 1942 and, as a second lieutenant, volunteered for paratrooper training. Eventually he was sent to England and was with the 82nd Airborne Division when it jumped into Holland in the fall of 1944 (at Nijmegen, as described in the book *A Bridge Too Far*). He was wounded in that battle and invalided back to England just before the Battle of the Bulge.

After the war ended, having recovered, he was in the Army of Occupation in Berlin attached to the 101st Airborne Division. When he was honorably discharged in March 1946 after five years in service, he held the rank of first lieutenant.

He then enrolled at the University of California, Berkeley, majoring in Forestry. He spent the 1947-48 school year at the University of Aberdeen (Scotland) School of Forestry and returned to Cal to graduate with his Forestry degree in June 1949.

Our last meeting was an outing to San Francisco's De Young Art Museum. David was a museumgoer and a book reader. As long as I can remember, he and my father kept a stamp collection. His letters home, from wherever he was in the world, usually had some beautiful stamps.

Now some comments on the effects on me of reading Norman Maclean's *Young Men and Fire:* My first response was, though it hurt to read it, that it was altogether a wonderful book for me. The book was a real catharsis for my long-unfinished grief about David.

Maclean helped me accompany the men to the end and to be inside their shoes. I was moved by his dedication and the fact that he cared so much about the lives of the people we loved.

A later, much more minor reaction was my irritation at Maclean for presenting David inaccurately, it seems to me, as "a free-wheeler," a "professional adventurer," who was somewhat bossy among the younger men, and who didn't mind striking off on his own, without authority to do so, whenever the impulse struck him. (Don't forget that all 15 of Dodge's crew did that when they had no idea why he was lighting that escape fire.)

David was intent on a career in forestry. He had taken the summer job – he said it was going to be the last jumping he would do – to earn money; he was sending me checks to help me go to Europe in the fall. He loved the outdoor life and was serious about establishing himself. His letters were enthusiastic about parts of the Montana country he had seen, and about the fact that he had been given some real forest work to do, cruising timber.

Yet, overall, I can't help but be grateful to Maclean for writing his book and helping me and millions of others to be "inside our loved ones' shoes" out on that mountain.

(Afterthoughts on Dave Navon by Starr Jenkins): One episode of the summer of '49 showed how serious Dave was about learning his forestry. Short Hall, of Colorado A&M (Fort Collins), had a war surplus Jeep he had just bought and was refurbishing in the evenings around camp.

On a weekend he invited two other forestry-student jumpers, Dave Navon and **Jock Fleming** (MSO-49), and me to ride with him out to the Powell Ranger Station on the west side of the Bitterroot Divide; i.e., just into Idaho. (That was before the Lewis and Clark Highway had been completed down the Lochsa, cutting through a vast area of wilderness.)

Short Hall, as always, wanted to see some new, nearly untouched country; but he and the other two foresters also wanted to make that 100-mile drive to get into a watershed they had never seen before to get their first real look at a Western White Pine, the great wood for matches and toothpicks, important items for macho western men. I was along to enjoy the country, too, and to witness these three budding foresters' great enthusiasm when they spotted their first one.

"There it is!" "Yeah. Hey, ain't that neat!" It was a marvelous lumber tree that is getting harder and harder to find in our nation's dwindling forests.

I believe Dave told me he was planning to return to Cal to get a master's degree in Range Management to strengthen his qualifications for a Forest Service or other land-management career. Yet one of his more wild dreams was to persuade the wealthy owner of some large California coast island to let him manage that island as a big game hunting preserve, where exotic species would be introduced and where well-off hunters could come "on safari" to hunt lions, tigers, Kodiak bears, rhinos, whatever he could get the owners to introduce and maintain on such a miniature wild world.

Luckily, perhaps, the National Park Service and the Nature Conservancy beat him to it with better ideas. But imagine – hunting Bengal tigers just 30 minutes from downtown Los Angeles. The company would have never run out of customers.

Note: The place where Navon died in Mann Gulch is marked with a Star of David.

Leonard Piper (Missoula ’49) – Aug. 5, 1949

Leonard, from Blairsville, Pa., trained in Missoula in 1949. He died with 11 other jumpers in the Mann Gulch Fire.

He was a Navy veteran of World War II and one of nine children. At the time of his death, he was living with his sister in Missoula while he attended the University of Montana, where he had completed two years.

Leonard’s sister-in-law, Althea Piper, remembering events: There was a report on the radio that smokejumpers had died in Montana. My husband and I went to his parents home that evening. We didn’t know if Leonard was one of the jumpers at that time.

We still hadn’t heard anything by Aug. 7. About 8 a.m. on the eighth, a local forester called and asked to talk to my husband, Garvin. After a moment, I heard my husband say, “Yes, that’s my brother.” We decided not to go to church, but Garvin went into town and left a note on their brother’s windshield to stop by after church. Their brother, Gilbert, and Leonard’s younger sister were all together planning to go to a reunion after church. They all decided to go to their sister, Dorothy’s, next and then to Grandma and Papa Pipers.

A lot of the families, like the Pipers, did not have a phone at that time. Grandma Piper thought something was wrong when she saw everyone coming. When she was told the news, she said that she didn’t want Leonard to be a smokejumper.

Leonard’s body was so badly burned that they identified him by the house key from his sister’s home in Helena.

Stanley J. Reba (Missoula ’48) – Aug. 5, 1949

Stan trained in Missoula in 1948. He died with 11 other Missoula smokejumpers in the Mann Gulch Fire.

The following is from *Some of the Men of Mann Gulch,* Starr Jenkins, 1993: Bits and Pieces of Stanley Reba’s life by Mrs. Andre Anderson, his sister-in-law: Stanley J. Reba was born Oct. 15, 1923, in Brooklyn, N.Y. Both of his parents, as best as I can remember, were Polish immigrants. His father, Walter Reba, was very conservative and strict, de nitely the head of the household. Stan had an older sister, Catherine, and a younger sister, Adeline. Their address at the time of Stan’s death was 96 Newell Street, Brooklyn. This was, I believe, the residence of Stan’s boyhood.

I do not know where he attended grade school, but he graduated from Brooklyn Boys’ High School, a Christian Brothers school. He received a football scholarship to Holy Cross College in Massachusetts and took his freshman year there. It was at this time that he joined the Army Air Corps.

He held the rank of second lieutenant and served in the Pacific, Saipan being one area mentioned. He received the Purple Heart, but neither my sister Julie nor I know the details about how he earned this.

Other medals he was awarded were the Asia Theatre Medal, the Victory Medal, and the American Service Medal.

After the war Stan resumed his studies, but this time at the University of Minnesota, School of Forestry. He began working summers with the Forest Service and began smokejumping the summer of 1948. Stan met Julie sometime during the fall of 1947. (I was only 11 years old, so I was not aware of my sister's social life then.) I do remember that during the summer of '48, while she was at home in our small town of Pierz, Minn., she was receiving letters from him from Missoula. (I was a nosey kid!) I believe he broke or sprained an ankle jumping that year. My sister Julie and Stan were married at St. Olaf's Church in Minneapolis Oct. 30, 1948.

Stan would have graduated from the University of Minnesota in Forestry in June 1950. His dream was to build a career with the Forest Service in upstate New York. However, he loved western Montana too, and that area would have been his second choice of where to spend his life.

As it turned out, Julie and Stan's married life was brief, nine whole months. They lived in a small trailer midway between Minneapolis and St. Paul, where Stan attended university classes. Stan was going to school on the GI Bill, and they didn't have much money. Stan took jobs with the Post Office and other organizations during vacations (Christmas and spring break).

After classes were out in mid-June, Stan left Minnesota to go to Fort Eustis in Virginia for a six-week period of ROTC training. It was during this time, I believe, that he earned his commission in the Army as first lieutenant. My sister, who was living at our family home in Pierz while Stan was in the East, was able to spend a short time with him. It was a brief little honeymoon – the honeymoon they had never had – and they spent it in Atlantic City.

Stan returned to Minnesota at the end of July and, after a brief visit, joined with his good friend **Joe Sylvia** to go out to Montana to rejoin the smokejumpers for their belated refresher jump training. I remember vividly the morning of Friday, July 29, when they were to leave us very early for the long drive to Missoula. Our whole family, along with Joe and Stan, gathered in our big, old-fashioned country kitchen for breakfast at about 5:30 a.m. My mother made a huge breakfast of pancakes, bacon and eggs, homemade sausage and pan-fried potatoes. I remember my dad asking Stan worriedly if that smokejumping out on fires in the backcountry wasn't rather dangerous.

Stan replied that no, it wasn't, that he had survived World War II and that was certainly a lot more dangerous. I remember standing in the driveway watching Joe and Stan pack their things into the little Chevy my dad had given them to use.

Those were final goodbyes, although at the time we were totally unaware of such a possibility. (I still have the Marine Corps sharpshooter pin that Joe gave me the day before they left. I had admired it and he gave it to me. I wore it in his honor on the day of the dedication of the Smokejumpers' Memorial in Missoula two years ago.)

I don't know what Stan's last week of life was like except that I remember my sister receiving phone calls, letting her know that he had arrived safely and had begun the usual refresher training for jumping. I learned later that during that week Stan's mother had had a fearsome dream about him.

The details of the dream I don't know, but it involved Stan's death. She was so frightened by the dream that she wrote a letter to him to tell him to be careful. He never got to read that letter.

The weekend of Aug. 5 was extremely hot in Minnesota too, as it was in Montana, the difference being only the humidity. Early Saturday morning (Aug. 6), my sister-in-law came to our house (before Julie was up) to tell my mother that she had heard a news broadcast on the radio telling of a bad fire burning between Helena and Missoula and that my mother should say nothing of this to Julie.

I did remember mother saying something aside to my dad, but for some reason, we were all under the impression that Stan and Joe would have to complete a solid week (five days) of training before being jumped into a fire. Thus, this bad fire near Helena would certainly not involve them.

My dad always listened to a 10 p.m. newscast before going to bed. That evening, Aug. 6, my sister came into the living room in time for the broadcast. The newscaster reported the bad Montana fire and the fact that a University of Minnesota student had died in the hospital that day. He then gave his name: Joseph B. Sylvia.

I can never describe the reaction of us all in the living room that night. We all started to cry, and my sister ran to the phone and placed a person-to-person call to Stan. The reply was that he couldn't be reached, that he was "on call." A terrible likelihood filled us with fear: If Joe Sylvia had been on that fire, so might be Stan Reba.

Thus began the all-night vigil of Aug. 6-7. The Smokejumper Center had taken my sister's number and at about 2 a.m. they called and confirmed Stan's actual presence on that fire crew, but said only that there were still 10 jumpers missing and that there were three survivors, the names of whom they would not give. We all thought that there was a shred of hope. Maybe it was just that we hoped beyond hope that he was alive.

My mother, dad, sister and I walked over to our nearby parish church about dawn, Aug. 7, to pray. In those days they didn't lock churches, at least not in our little town of Pierz, Minn. I can remember thinking that Stan just must be alive. Of course he had been dead for well over 24 hours by then.

The final call came about 2 p.m. Sunday. My dad answered the phone and from my bedroom I remember hearing this terribly strange sound. I ran out into the kitchen to see my dad standing there by the phone, just sobbing bitterly. In my years of life I had never seen or heard my dad cry before! I realized, as we all did then, what the phone call had told us.

To conclude, some of my memories of Stan: The first Christmas, the only Christmas they were married, Stan gave me a little gold locket which he had picked out himself. Julie told me how he had wanted to se-

lect it himself, with no help from her, and that the suggestion of the locket as a gift was his idea, not hers. That beautiful locket was very precious to me, and I would still have it but for the fact that I put it in Julie's coffin when she died 10 years later.

I remember visiting them, Stan and Julie, at Easter time during my break from school. Stan was very busy at school but took the time to take me to the Como Park Zoo in St. Paul. He also, during that visit, drove me a good distance, during an early spring snowstorm, to a Catholic church so that I could attend Good Friday services.

I remember later that spring, when I was very sick, Stan drove Julie to Pierz, a two-and-a-half-hour drive, so they could see me. This he did in spite of having a heavy load of tests to prepare for that week. Stan also taught me to eat the skin of a baked potato because "that was the most nutritious part."

Stan loved to listen to Tex Ritter and had an album of Tex Ritter with which he'd tease Julie by playing it over and over. She was not a Ritter fan, preferring classical and standard hits rather than country. But Stan loved to listen to my mother's records of string quartets, so he enjoyed some of the classical too.

Stan Reba, that burly, football-playing, smokejumping man, also loved poetry. One of his favorites, "Crossing the Bar" by Alfred Lord Tennyson, was used on his prayer card when he was buried, at my sister's request.

I also remember that Stan wrote beautiful letters to my sister. I, of course, never read them, but I remember that she read parts of his letters to me, years later, when I was first considering marriage to someone. As I write this, I can't help but think of how much richer our lives would have been had Stan lived, not only my sister's life, but also our entire family's life. When Stan died, we not only lost a wonderful son and brother, but we also lost a wonderful daughter and sister.

After Stan's death, my sister was never the same; she never remarried and 10 years later she took her own life. Tragic events affect so many and have such long-lasting consequences. Writing this has brought into focus, once again, the impact of that very tragic Mann Gulch Fire, Aug. 5, 1949.

Marvin L. "Dick" Sherman (Missoula '49) – Aug. 5, 1949

Marvin trained in Missoula in 1949. He died with 11 other jumpers in the Mann Gulch Fire.
The following is from *Some of the Men of Mann Gulch,* Starr Jenkins, 1993: Letter from a friend, Tom Magee, Sr.: In regard to Marvin Sherman, Dick as I knew him. Dick worked for the U.S. Forest Service on the Lolo District from 1945 to 1949, if I recall correctly. Help was hard to get at the end of World War II. Young men and old alike did the job.

I met Dick through my two teenage sisters as well as several other young men who were running interference. Dick was manning Mormon Peak Lookout, about seven miles from our ranch on Lolo Creek. I had a good saddle horse, and the ranger gave me $10 to ride the telephone line and trail up to that lookout. It was like a vacation to me. I would talk my folks into buying me a case of beer; I'd put it on my saddle and head for Mormon Peak. While drinking warm beer, Dick and I would clear the trail and maintain tele-

phone lines. As the empty beer cans accumulated, we would dig holes and bury them where the rangers wouldn't find them.

From that lookout you could look right down into the town of Lolo and see the Saturday night dance hall, The Rockaway. Sometimes we wished we were there and sometimes we were thinking, "Hell, we are already in heaven; why do you want to go down there?"

The Forest Service had two burros, Gene and Ginny, which Dick usually had at the lookout to pack water. One could pack 20 gallons and the other 30 gallons. When he didn't have the burros, Dick would pack a five-gallon backpack and two two-gallon water sacks one and a half miles from the head of Mormon Creek every two days.

My mother, Audrey, liked Dick very much. The huckleberries that year were really good, so we made a date to take my mom picking berries. There was a short route, but it was too steep for my mom.

After picking our berries, we walked the remaining half-mile to Dick's lookout. As the tower came into sight, Mother said, "My God, does he live up there?" With the help of Dick and me, we got her to climb the 30-foot tower. After she got her second wind, she said she wanted to cook Dick a good dinner. I had packed enough up there to feed 10 people. Fun was had by all.

I started to fly at the Johnson Flying Service, J-3 Cubs, in 1946. Dick tried to talk me into smokejumping. I said, "Bull; if it's flying, I'm riding!"

I got my first airplane ride at Hale Field, Missoula, Mont., in 1935, at a penny a pound. Bob and Dick Johnson were the pilots.

Well, sir, I say with deep regret that I moved to the Swan River Valley later in 1946, sawing logs with my dad, and I never saw Dick again, but we all loved him.

The X-CEL Project, Helena High School, quotes Ray Belston, Marvin's cousin: Dick was not only my cousin, but he was also my buddy and friend. Many a day we spent along the streams fishing in the Bitter Root Valley. Many hours we worked together in the hay and grain fields, breaking a horse or trapping mink and muskrat. I also spent many hours with Dick at the lookout above Lolo, when he worked for the USFS. Dick was a dedicated person to his family, friends, the military and the Forest Service. He was ready to lay his life on the line whenever the call came. He did just that.

The X-CEL Project quotes Francis Middlemist: Marvin was a favorite with the men at the Lolo Ranger Station where my husband, Ross, worked. He would talk to Ross sometimes about how he disliked what he was doing. Ross asked him why he didn't quit, but Dick said he wanted to get married and needed the money. When Mann Gulch happened, Ross felt as bad as if Dick had been his own son.

Henry Thol, Jr. (Missoula '49) – Aug. 5, 1949

Henry trained in Missoula in 1949. He died with 11 other Missoula jumpers in the Mann Gulch Fire.

The following is from the obituary published in the *Kalispell Daily* shortly after Thol's dealth: Henry James Thol Jr. was born April 17, 1930, in Kalispell. He lived all of his life in Kalispell and graduated from high school in 1948.

Henry was in his second season working for the Forest Service and began his smokejumper training in June. He had planned to enter Montana State University in the fall.

Mrs. William Hellman describes Thol: The only smokejumper that I knew that was killed along with Bill was Henry Thol Jr. We both grew up in the same neighborhood. His father (a retired forest ranger) was terribly upset. He felt they had made very poor judgment on this fire.

From the X-CEL Project: On August 5, 1949, Henry was called off a roofing project along with others to board the DC-3 to Mann Gulch. He was 19.

From Helena High School senior Tanner Jackson: There was one thing that struck me about Thol's cross (at Mann Gulch). At the base of the monument there was a small flat stone, very old by the look of it, on which was carved: Henry/you/love/always/Sara. Although the entire message was indecipherable, the emotion expressed in those few words moved me more than anything else I witnessed in Mann Gulch.

Newton Thompson (Missoula '49) – Aug. 5, 1949

He trained in Missoula in 1949. Newton died with 11 other Missoula jumpers in the Mann Gulch Fire. *Pasadena Star News* reported: Newton was 23 when he died. He was born in Alhambra, California, graduated from Alhambra High School and attended Pomona College.

From X-CEL Book: Thompson was a veteran and had worked for the Forest Service for two years before becoming a smokejumper.

Silas "Ray" Thompson (Missoula '48) – Aug. 5, 1949

Silas trained in Missoula in 1948. He died with 11 other Missoula jumpers in the Mann Gulch Fire.

From **Bob Dusenbury** (MSO-48): Ray was a graduate of Central High School in Charlotte, N.C. He spent a year at North Carolina State, became an Army paratrooper, served in Japan and was 21 when he lost his life.

When growing up in Charlotte, he was always camping, fishing and trapping. He loved the outdoors and felt he had finally found the place he was looking for in Western Montana. Occasionally, Ray would stay with my wife and me in Missoula. We considered him family.

From Joan Newcomb, Thompson's sister: Ray graduated from Central High School in 1945 and entered forestry school at North Carolina State in 1946. He was a lookout in Washington state during the summer of '46 and decided that he wanted to attend forestry school at the university in Missoula.

He joined the Army in September 1946 and was a paratrooper with the 11th Airborne Division in Japan.

After his discharge in 1948 he entered the University of Montana.

After his first season with the smokejumpers in 1948, he had to attend U.S. Army camp in 1949 and joined the smokejumpers at the end of July.

William Hellman (Missoula '46) – Aug. 6, 1949

He trained in Missoula in 1946. Bill was the squadleader on the Mann Gulch Fire. He died of burns in a Helena hospital the day after the fire blew up.

The following is from *Some of the Men of Mann Gulch,* Starr Jenkins, 1993: Hellman is described by his widow, the later Mrs. Gerry McHenry: I did receive a complimentary copy of Norman Maclean's book, but there were parts of it that I was perturbed about, and some of the information in the book was incorrect.

One thing was that I was not just pregnant; Bill and I did have a son born on June 27, 1949. This child died a few months later, in November 1949, of a ruptured diaphragm.

Another thing that bothered me was the fact that Maclean stated that Bill could not remember his prayers. Bill was raised a Catholic. He had married outside his church, but prayers are not something you forget how to do.

Also I question Maclean's statement that Wag Dodge did not know the names of the smokejumpers in his crew. For me this passage gave the impression that Wag Dodge was the foreman and the others were of little importance, so he didn't bother to learn their names.

As for the backfire Wag set in order to provide a safe escape area: With the heavy roar of the fire, no one could have heard what he was telling them to do anyway. These were just a few of the things that were upsetting about his book. Now, as to Bill's life: William J. "Bill" Hellman was born Aug. 3, 1925, in Kalispell, Mont. So his 24th birthday was just two days before Mann Gulch, when you (Starr Jenkins), lucky four, jumped into Yellowstone and the unlucky four, including Bill, returned to Missoula in time to catch the Mann Gulch fire two days later.

Bill would have graduated from Flathead County High School with the Class of 1943, but he volunteered for the Navy at 17. He served with the Navy for two years and then transferred to the Marines, being trained as a combat medical corpsman. As such, he took part in many island-hopping invasions in the Pacific. He also served for a time in occupied Japan.

Upon his discharge from the service after his first summer of smokejumping, he and I were married Sept. 18, 1946, here in Kalispell. My name was Geraldine Mather before I became Mrs. Bill Hellman. He enrolled in the University of Montana, attended there for two years, then attended Montana State College at Havre, Mont., as well as Greeley State Teachers College at Greeley, Colo.

By the summer of '49 he had but three months of training to complete before he would have earned his degree. His plans were to become a science and botany teacher.

Bill took part in the Forest Service ceremonial parachute jump in front of the White House in Washington, D.C., on June 28, 1949, as one of a select group of four experienced squadleader jumpers. He had been hesitant to go, as we were expecting our first child to be born any day, but we felt it was a great honor to be asked, so he did go and our son was born the day before his jump on June 27, 1949.

Bill's father, James Hellman, was also employed by the Forest Service and did retire from the Forest Service.

Another comment made in Maclean's book many times was about the smokejumpers drinking at all hours and carousing with low-class women. The only thing I have to say about that is I guess we didn't know any of those men that Maclean pretended to know.

All the ones we knew were working in the summer for the money so they could go to school in the fall, winter and spring; and most of them were going to college under the GI Bill program. And they were working too hard to spend much time drinking and carousing.

The only smokejumper I knew who was killed along with Bill was Henry Thol Jr. Henry and I grew up in the same neighborhood. Of course, his father was terribly upset, especially with his knowledge – as a retired forest ranger – of working in the woods. He felt they had made very poor judgment on this fire, which I am sure was true.

Henry Thol Jr. was a fine young man. He came from an excellent family.

I would like to say that Bill was a great husband, and I am sure he would have made a good father. I have been lucky again with my second marriage to another outstanding man. Of course, I am prejudiced about all this.

Philip McVey (Missoula '48) – Aug. 6, 1949

Phil, from Ronan, Mont., trained in Missoula in 1948. He died with 11 other Missoula jumpers in the Mann Gulch Fire.

From the X-CEL Project, Helena High School, August 1999: Phillip lived in Babb, Mont., at the time of his death. During his childhood, his family lived in multiple places along the Canadian border because his father was employed by the U.S. Immigration Service. Phil went to Browning High School and joined the Navy before he graduated. He served five seasons with the Forest Service, and this was his second year as a smokejumper. He was only 22 when he perished at Mann Gulch.

Philip was a curly-headed kid, who – like many of the smokejumpers – was a good athlete. He had played semi-pro baseball (as had several other of the smokejumpers) and played shortstop on the smokejumpers softball team. He followed Major League Baseball with a keen interest.

He was also an adventurer. When he was 14 years old, he and a friend took off on a bicycle trip that ended up covering 400 miles. They started in Northport, Wash. and rode their bikes to the Grand Coulee

Dam project, where they visited with his friend's brother.

Then the two headed not home, but to Spokane on their bicycles, camping as they went. From Spokane they headed back home to Northport.

When the war started, Philip was attending high school in Browning, Mont., on the Blackfoot Indian Reservation. He entered Browning High School in the fall of 1943 at the start of his junior year. The school had a dormitory to accommodate students who lived out of town. Since Phil's father worked for the U.S. Immigration Service near the Canadian border, he lived in the dorm. All other students in the dorm were from the Blackfoot Indian tribe.

Phil preferred to be called "Flip." He dropped out of school to join the Navy in 1945.

This was Philip's second summer as a smokejumper, though there hadn't been much firefighting ac- tion that first summer. He spent most of his 1948 summer clearing trails and forest slash out of the Castle Creek Ranger station, near Grangeville, Idaho. Fellow smokejumper **Jerry Linton** (MSO-48) recalled that Phil was a hard worker and always did more than his share.

"We were all in pretty good shape and Phil was exceptional and was proud of his strong, muscular body," he said.

From Beverly Hamel, a neighbor of the McVey family: "Phil and a bunch of his buddies joined the smokejumpers to make money for college. A bunch of the smokejumpers would come home on weekends with Phil so there were enough boys to go around for all the girls. Anyway, Phil and I spent a lot of time together. He was such a sweet, respectful guy with beautiful eyes and a nice smile.

"Well, the guys left for Missoula one evening, and I guess it was the next morning they were on their way to Mann Gulch. My brother-in-law, **Harold Webbe** (MSO-48), was a friend of Phil's and a smokejumper and was to go to Mann Gulch but was sick the morning they left. I often wondered who it was who went in his place.

"I was at his brother Bob's when the news of Mann Gulch came through. It stunned us. They said that Phil's body weighed 69 pounds in the body bag. The fire was so intense that they identified the bodies by apparel on the side of the body that lay next to them on the ground."

Joseph Sylvia (Missoula '48) – Aug. 6, 1949

Joe trained in Missoula in 1948. He died with 11 other Missoula jumpers in the Mann Gulch Fire. Joe was a 1942 graduate of Plymouth (Mass.) High School. He served in the Marine Corps from August 1942 to October 1945 in the South Pacific and attained the rank of corporal.

At the time of his death, he was a forestry student at the University of Minnesota with fellow jumper, Stan Reba.

Thelma Flanagan, Joe's sister: Joe enjoyed hunting, fishing and living near the ocean. He was a strong swimmer. He saw plenty of action in the Marines. We had four brothers in the service and they all managed to survive.

Lloyd "Chuck" Pickard (MSO-48): Even though I was from Plymouth, Mass., I didn't meet Joe until we both reported for smokejumper training in 1948. I was a squadleader the following year and helped Joe and his best pal, Stan Reba, with their refresher jumps. I was supposed to be the squadleader on the Mann Gulch Fire but Bill Hellman kidded me out of it. He said his wife was pregnant and that he really needed the money. I told him he could take my place. I helped load the plane and then off to a three-manner on the St. Joe. We didn't get off the fire for three days and by that time most of the Mann Gulch jumpers had been killed.

From *Young Men and Fire:* Sylvia did not die immediately. The three survivors of the fire, Dodge, Sallee and Rumsey, found him on a rock, severely burned but conscious. Rescuers reached him at 2:00 a.m. on August 6. He was carried to the mouth of Mann Gulch by 7:00 a.m., ferried by speedboat to the road and driven to the hospital in Helena, where he arrived about 10:00 a.m. He died of kidney failure and burns before noon.

Keith Hendrickson (North Cascades '47), **Gerald Helmer** (North Cascades '53) and **Robert Carlman** (North Cascades '57) – June 23, 1958

Bill Moody (NCSB-57), retired North Cascades Smokejumper Base manager, provides the following: The accident occurred on the Eight Mile Ridge Fire, Winthrop Ranger District, Okanogan National Forest, Wash. A Twin Beech aircraft, N164Z, piloted by Robert H. Cavanaugh, was on a mission to drop a Merry Digger trencher, chain saws, fuel and general supplies to jumpers who had jumped the fire, just 15 miles north of Winthrop, a few hours before.

Twenty-two rookie jumpers had also driven and hiked to the fire. The rookies, who were in their second week of training, were led by Foreman **Elmer Neufeld** (CJ-44).

The aircraft crew comprised squadleader Hendrickson, 29, squadleader trainee Helmer, 24, and Carlman, a second-year jumper and the Winthrop District's timber sales officer. Carlman was riding in the co-pilot's seat.

The accident occurred during cargo drop while a severe thunderstorm was in the area. The pilot apparently took evasive action to escape a downdraft. The aircraft turned sharply but was carried down into the hillside. All four aboard died from the impact and the ensuing aircraft fire.

Helmer lived in Sweet Home, Ore., and had served as a paratrooper during the Korean War.

Robert Carlman (North Cascades '57) – June 23, 1958

Leslie Yates, retired timber officer, Okanogan N.F.: During 1955, I was a timber management assistant (TMA) on the Okanogan N.F. I was chief of a four-man cruising crew. Bob was one of my companions. In 1957 Bob went through smokejumper training and then back to his regular job in timber management.

He was also to learn cargo dropping.

I used smokejumpers who were at the bottom of the list to do odd timber jobs. Gerald Helmer worked for me for several days. He was likeable and a good worker.

The forest safety officer concluded that the plane hit a downdraft and lost elevation with no time to make a correction. Downdrafts are common in the North Cascades.

Bob left a widow and two small boys.

Gerald Helmer (North Cascades ’53) – June 23, 1958

Gerald Helmer, 24, was from Sweet Home, Ore., and had gone to mechanic’s school. He was a paratrooper during the Korean War.

Keith Hendrickson (North Cascades ’47) – June 23, 1958

Keith was also known as “Gus.” His wife, Chloe, was about nine months pregnant at the time of the crash. They met at Whitworth College in Spokane, Wash. Gus graduated from Okanogan High School and served in the Air Force.

Ed Summerfield (NCSB-47): Keith was one of 10 rookies who trained in 1947 and was better known as Gus. After training we were sent to the Wallowa N.F. for the summer. We didn’t get any fire jumps by the time I left in early September.

In 1948 Gus was my jump partner, and it was also a slow year. The only fire we jumped was a state fire near the road and we helped with mop-up. It was obvious that we had been sent to the fire just to move the stagnant jump list.

John Rolf (Missoula ’57) and **Gary Williams** (Missoula ’59) – Aug. 4, 1959

The information below was provided by former Missoula Smokejumper Foreman **Roland Stoleson** (MSO-56) and *The Missoulian* newspaper of Aug. 6, 1959:

On the morning of Aug. 4, Ford Tri-Motor N8419, piloted by Robert Culver, took off from the Grangeville, Idaho, airfield. Its mission was to deliver goods to the backcountry airstrip at Moose Creek on the Nez-perce National Forest, Idaho, and to drop two smokejumpers on a fire burning on Pettibone Ridge. Aboard the aircraft were the forest supervisor, Alva Blackerby, foreman Roland Stoleson, and Rolf and Williams. When landing at Moose Creek to drop off the supplies before dropping the jumpers, the aircraft crashed into the trees at the end of the dirt runway and burst into flames.

Culver was in the pilot’s seat and Blackerby in the right front seat. They both escaped through small windows in the cockpit but were seriously burned. Williams was seated on cargo in the middle of the fuselage beneath the wing tank that ruptured. He received fatal burns and died on site.

Stoleson was seated next to the open fuselage door and dove out at the explosion. A tree, knocked

down by the crash and on fire, interfered with his exit, but though burned and bruised, he made a successful escape.

Rolf was sitting to the right of Stoleson, but did not dive out through the burning tree. He received severe burns and died in a Grangeville hospital later that day. Blackerby died a few weeks later from burn complications.

John Rolf, from Buchanan, N.Y., was 25 when he died. He was born July 21, 1933, in Peekskill, N.Y., and graduated from Hendrick High School in Montrose, N.Y., in 1950. He entered the Navy in May 1951 and served until December 1954.

John studied Forestry at Paul Smith College from 1955 through 1957 and attended Hartwick College at Oneonta, N.Y., from 1957 through 1959. He worked for the Forest Service during the summer of 1956 as a laborer in Oregon, and then trained as a smokejumper in the summer of 1957. He returned for the 1958 and 1959 seasons.

At Hartwick, John was a Biology major, a member and president of Beta Beta Beta, an honorary biology society, and senior class vice president. However, his death prevented him from attending his senior year (1959-60). He was also a member of the Circle K club, a freshman dorm counselor, member of the Student Senate, Film Club and the Tau Kappa Epsilon fraternity.

John was one of four Hartwick students elected to "Who's Who Among Students in American Universities and Colleges" in 1958. Students receiving this recognition were elected based "academic performance, extracurricular activities, citizenship, service to the school and promise of future usefulness."

Gary Williams was born May 20, 1936, at West Valley, N.Y., and graduated from West Valley Central School in June 1954. In 1955 he entered the New York Ranger School, part of the New York State College of Forestry, at Wamakena, N.Y. He left that school in February 1956.

That summer, he worked for the Shasta-Trinity National Forest in California. He entered the Army in October of that year and served at Fort Sill, Okla., with a guided missile unit. Gary completed his military service in September 1958, after which he entered the University of Montana for his junior year. He became a smokejumper in June 1959.

Dale R. Swedeen (Missoula '61) – May 1, 1992

Dale broke his back when he oscillated into a rock on his first re jump. That was on the Cochran Gulch Fire, Helena National Forest, Montana, July 8, 1961. The accident rendered him a paraplegic, and he died 31 years later of complications from that accident, at the age of 53.

Dale's brother, H.J. Swedeen, provided the following information: A native of Sioux Falls, S.D., Dale attended high school in Rapid City, S.D., then graduated from Kubasaki High School in Okinawa. Prior to his accident, Dale had attended South Dakota State University and the University of South Dakota where he had been a Radio/TV major.

In 1964, he moved to Florida where he completed his education, receiving a degree in Nursing Home Administration. He moved to Mesa, Ariz., in 1989, where he owned a hair salon and where he died. He is buried in Larchwood, Iowa.

Dale was a member of the Lutheran Church and the Phi Delta Theta fraternity. He also served with the Civil Air Patrol from which he retired as a major. He's buried in Sioux Falls, his hometown.

Kenneth Salyer (McCall '54) – July 9, 1965

The following information is courtesy of the McCall Smokejumpers: A Twin Beech aircraft piloted by Byron "Skip" Knapp, took off from the McCall Airport July 9, 1965, on a mission to drop four smokejumpers on a fire on Norton Creek, Payette National Forest, Idaho, about 50 miles east of McCall.

After dropping the four safely, the spotter, Kenneth "Moose" Salyer, began dropping their cargo. During a low-level cargo run the plane plunged into a ridge in the Norton Creek drainage about 50 miles east of McCall.

The burning plane touched off a fire that hampered efforts of the smokejumpers to reach the area. A helicopter that landed near the crash site was unable to assist, so it returned to McCall shortly after nightfall. The following day, Forest Service of cials and the Valley County coroner hiked to the crash site.

Although the exact cause of the crash is unknown, the plane may have hit a downdraft. Idaho State Aeronautics officials had reported severe turbulence throughout the area earlier in the day.

Salyer, who was married and the father of one, taught industrial arts and coached football and wrestling at Fairmount Junior High School in Boise. He spent 12 summers as a smokejumper and had more than 100 jumps.

Knapp, the father of four, a former U.S. Air Force pilot, flew for Johnson Flying Service of Missoula and McCall. This was his first year as a pilot in the McCall area. At the request of his widow, Skip's body remains near the crash site, buried in the wilderness.

Mary K. (Salyer) Sprague: Ken was only known as "Moose" in the jumper camp and most of the people who knew him in McCall and Boise. I was about the only one who called him Ken.

He grew up in Waterloo, Iowa, and was a national AAU wrestling champion as well as being all-state in football and wrestling at the high school level.

Ken discovered Idaho on his way to a job in Montana in 1953. After joining the McCall Smokejumpers in 1954, he returned to the University of Iowa, where he played football. After a football injury he transferred to Iowa State Teachers College and then to Boise Junior College, where he graduated with an associate's degree.

After we married in 1959, Ken continued to jump each summer. In 1962 he received a wrestling scholarship from Washington State Teachers College in Ellensburg and finished his bachelors degree in June 1964.

Ken had one year of teaching and coaching at Fairmont Junior High School in Boise before his untimely death.

Bill Salyer, Ken's younger brother: I was impressed with Ken from watching him beat every wrestler he wrestled. I remember him running for a touchdown and having to jump over the last potential tackler. I remember the year of the accident and that I would probably not be skiing and was thinking about coming out there.

Arden Davis (Fairbanks '64) – May 11, 1966

Arden was born in Sandpoint, Idaho, graduated from Thompson Falls (Mont.) High School and received a degree in Forestry from the University of Montana in 1963. He was married with a wife and two young daughters.

This information is from **Jerry Timmons** (MSO-62), retired Alaska Smokejumpers superintendent: During a practice jump on Birch Hill just outside Fairbanks, Arden landed in some hardwoods and hung up on a low birch tree. He was just a couple of feet off the ground, so instead of doing the usual letdown routine, which involved rappelling out of his chute, he popped his Cape wells, cutting himself loose from the risers of his parachute with the intent of dropping to the ground.

However, he'd failed to check his shroud lines, and one was under his helmet. Thus, when he dropped from his canopy, he was strangled. Other jumpers – Jerry Timmons, **Don Wahl** (MSO-63), **Roy Percival** (NCSB-57) and **Bob Webber** (MSO-62) – tried to revive him, but to no avail.

Cecil Hicks (NCSB-62): We were jumping three-man sticks on the University of Alaska Experimental Farm. It was the first practice jump for returning jumpers. The jump spot was in a strip that ran uphill into the trees.

I was the first man out, followed by Arden and **Jerry Fuller** (FBX-65). **Greg West** (FBX-64), a new squadleader, was the spotter. It was breezy. Jerry and I immediately turned into the wind and drifted backward into the trees. We wondered why Arden was running with the wind. He landed quite a distance from us. Most of the trees were birch, aspen and some spruce about 35 feet tall. In Alaska you were usually able to make it to the ground crashing through the branches. I got to the ground. Jerry yelled that he hung up. After we gathered our gear, we headed to the jump spot to get some pulaskis to chop the trees down.

The rest of the load landed near the jump spot. We didn't see Arden but figured that he was having a problem untangling his parachute from the trees.

After retrieving our chutes and returning to the jump spot we found that Arden wasn't there. **Tom Crane**

(FBX-62), Jerry Fuller, **Neal Rylander** (MSO-61) and I took off at a dead run toward Arden's parachute. We found him hanging with a suspension line caught under his helmet, his capewells popped. Apparently he had failed to clear the suspension line and was strangled. His feet were about two feet off the ground. All attempts to revive him failed.

Although this accident happened a long time ago, it never really leaves my mind. I don't talk about it much, but sometimes at night I make this fatal jump again in slow motion in my dreams and wonder all the "what-ifs" that could have resulted in a different, happier ending.

Tommy Smith (Cave Junction '61) – May 5, 1967

From the *Illinois Valley News,* May 1967: Smitty is dead. Tall, lanky, always smiling, Smitty, who had been jumping out of the Siskiyou Aerial Project for five years, drowned while making a river crossing after building helispots in the remote Illinois River Canyon area. Smith, **Rey Zander** (NCSB-56) and **Ron McMinimy** (RDD-65) had parachuted into the nearly inaccessible region Thursday to build helispots.

After completing their mission, they were trying to cross the Illinois River to reach the River Trail. Smith entered the calm water with 150 feet of line tied to him, which was to be used later to bring a rubber raft with their gear across. He purposely drifted downstream to the chosen landing place, still in calm water but just above the point where the river current gained strength.

As he started to climb out on the rocks, the line was caught by the current and pulled him back into the water. Zander and McMinimy, on the opposite bank, took the slack out of the line in an attempt to keep him from drifting downstream. As Smith swung back toward the other shore, he submerged twice. Feeling the only chance Smith had was to be free, they released the line. Smith started through the rapids and the line caught on an underwater boulder holding him just below the surface.

Jeff Duewel, *Grants Pass Daily Courier,* 2007: Tommy Smith had a date with his girlfriend planned for the evening of Friday, May 5, 1967, so he and fellow smokejumpers Rey Zander and Ron McMinimy hurried to the rugged banks of the Illinois River after roughing out a helicopter landing area near Nome Peak. It was 11 in the morning.

They still had to ferry their gear across in a rubber raft, walk up the opposite side to the Illinois River Trail, and pack out a few miles to a dirt road.

Smith, 6-feet-1 and skinny as a rail, tied 150 feet of 1-inch-thick nylon rope around his waist, jumped in and swam across. After that, everything went wrong.

Forty years (and 10 days) later, Floy Ann Smith flipped through photos of Tommy, the oldest of four children, in an Army yearbook from Fort Ord, Calif. Inside was a letter dated April 3, 1964, commending her son for being the outstanding trainee in his company.

Tommy loved his Chevrolet El Camino and his Triumph motorcycle. He bowled for the Byrd's Market team.

Floy has a casserole he gave her for Christmas 1966. She scribbles notes to herself on an old tablet of work logs of her son's from 40 years ago.

There are a few shots of Sandy Weeks, his girlfriend, whom he met in Ashland while going to Southern Oregon College and working at Safeway. Tommy's family moved to Grants Pass from Texas in 1954, and he graduated from Grants Pass High School in 1958.

"He was going to bring her home to meet me on Mother's Day," 88-year-old Floy Smith said, sitting in her neat retirement home in Grants Pass. "He was a very good son. I shed all the tears I ever had the first year or two after he died."

Terry Mewhinney (CJ-64), Smith's best friend and roommate in Cave Junction, was directly across the river on York Butte with **John Robison** (CJ-65), also clearing a landing spot for a helicopter.

"I heard the call on the radio, 'We think we lost a jumper,' " said Mewhinney, now retired and living in Agness.

Down in the canyon, Tommy Smith had already drowned. Smith either was pulled back into the water by the force of the current on the rope, slipped and fell, or jumped in to find a better landing spot downstream – the accounts vary. But once back in the water, he drifted into faster water, swollen with snowmelt. McMinimy and Zander were scarcely able to pull him against the current. When they did, he went under water.

According to Project Air Officer **Delos Dutton** (MSO-51) in a note to smokejumpers, Smith came within five feet of the bank he originally had been on. McMinimy and Zander ran downstream, still hanging onto the rope, but came to a rock wall.

They let go of the rope in the hope that Smith would be able to get to shore. But the rope became tangled in rocks, pulled him under and held him there. A helicopter was called in, picked up the two other men, but was unable to retrieve Smith's body. The next morning he had washed downstream.

His body wasn't found until May 13, a quarter-mile below the mouth of Clear Creek, about 700 yards from where he first entered the river. Mewhinney covered his friend's body with a blanket in the shallows and pulled him out.

Smith was the only jumper based at the Siskiyou Smokejumper Base from 1943 to 1981 to die on the job, although a pilot died in a crash in 1944. Today a memorial flagpole and plaque stand out at the "Gobi," what the jumpers called their base, now being considered for designation as a historical site. Smokejumper **Chuck Mansfield** (CJ-59), now of Los Alamos, N.M., said after Smith's funeral about 10 guys went to Larry's Drive-In and talked about the accident.

Smith had apparently tied a solid bowline, with no chance of loosening. He didn't have a knife. Mansfield

said the men forgot to bring paddles, but Mewhinney said they never intended to use the raft for anything but their gear. The raft had been dropped by the river.

Former smokejumper **Gary Buck** (CJ-66) of Cave Junction said he spoke with Zander and McMinimy later in the summer of 1967.

"Rey literally started crying. It was tough on those two guys. They liked Tommy."

Many of the Siskiyou Smokejumpers still hold a strong bond. They are proud of the lack of big wildfires during their years of work. They've done reunions in 1977, 2002, and 2006, and assembled a database to keep in touch. But no one's around who saw what happened on the Illinois River that day.

Zander drowned in a 1986 snorkeling accident in Westport, Wash., according to smokejumper records. The last anybody heard of McMinimy was 1977, his last year as a smokejumper, according to Buck.

"One of our jumpers works for the FBI," Buck said. "He tried to find McMinimy through his channels, and he couldn't even do it."

Late afternoon, May 5, 1967, Tommy's dad, George, was painting a fence. Floy was inside with 9-year-old Patricia, her youngest child. The Forest Service official drove up to the house in Grants Pass with the grim news.

"I said, 'Isn't there any hope he could be alive?' You're in shock. You don't believe it."

To this day Floy is bitter the two men let go of the rope. She wrote a letter to the Forest Service in Washington, D.C. She asked McMinimy shortly after her son's death why they let go, and he reiterated that pulling on the rope made Tommy go under water. Fellow smokejumpers say it was just a bad accident. Floy said the family used to go beachcombing quite a bit, and en route, they'd often stop at the smokejumper base and go out to the flagpole.

George died in 1990 and is buried right next to Tommy at Hillcrest Cemetery with a spot open for Floy. Floy faithfully visited Tommy's grave at Hillcrest on his birthday, July 23, and on May 5, for many years. She always saw flowers from someone else on the gravestone and didn't find out for 25 years that they had been left by Glenda Marchant.

Marchant rigged parachutes at the smokejumper base for more than 20 years, and her in-laws were buried near Tommy. Marchant, now living in Coos Bay, said she fondly remembered Tommy Smith's blond hair and pleasant personality.

"It was devastating to have that happen to one of our boys," Marchant said. "I have empathy for his mother. We lost a son in a car accident 19 years ago."

Last June, Floy went to a smokejumper reunion at the base. She looked at old photos of her son and

talked to some of his friends.

"She asked me if I knew her son," Buck said. "I said, 'Yes, he was a really good guy,' and she smiled. We went over and looked at a couple of photos of Tommy."

"It was funny – here were all these old guys with white hair and white beards," Floy said. "And Tommy is still 26 years old to me."

Thomas Regennitter (Redding '67) – June 3, 1970

The following information is provided by **Larry Boggs** (RDD-63): On a hot afternoon, the jumper loft in Redding received a request for 16 jumpers for a 20-acre lightning fire on the Big Bar District, Shasta-Trinity National Forest. The Oak Fire was about 15 minutes' flight time in a DC-3 from the jump base.

After dropping drift streamers, the spotter, Bob Kersh, started dropping two-man sticks. Tom Regennitter was in the next-to-last stick, to be followed by **Kevin Hodgin** (RDD-67) and Larry Boggs. After Tom exited as the second man in his stick, Hodgin and Boggs were told to hook up and stand in the door.

The spotter noticed that Tom was drifting to the southwest with his hands hanging at his side, not on the guidelines. He held up the last stick and asked the pilot to continue circling to see what or where Tom did or went. Boggs' first thought was that Tom had either knocked himself out in the jump or did not know where the spot was.

The aircraft orbited about three times with a lot of radio chatter between it and the ground. Tom was drifting southwest into Oak Creek drainage, but suddenly his parachute turned 180 degrees and headed for the fire.

The plane continued to circle until his parachute drifted into the jump spot, at which time Hodgin and Boggs were again told to hook up and get in the door. They jumped and landed in the spot, which was on the ridge next to the fire's edge.

Those who found Tom determined that he had a broken neck. The only mark on him was a red and black line, about 6-8 inches long (looking like a static-line burn) on the left side of his neck.

The day was getting short, and there was no place for a helicopter to land, so help or an investigation team couldn't be onsite immediately. Some of the jumpers worked most of the night building a helispot for the investigation team's arrival the next day and to facilitate the departure of the jumpers, who would be relieved by other fire ghters. It was a very sad day and a long night.

Rich Grandalski (RDD-64): "Tom Regennitter and I were working on the Angeles National Forest in Southern California and were both part of the Redding Smokejumper Retread program in 1969 and 1970. We made our last fire jump together in 1969 into a giant redwood grove on the Sequoia National Forest in Central California.

"It was one of those 'gravy' jumps, with the top of a single redwood burning from a lightning strike and a dirt road to the fire. We were told before we jumped that we were to cut a fire line around the tree and keep the ground fire from spreading.

"The forest had a policy that the forest supervisor was the only person who could authorize cutting down a redwood, and unless the burning tree posed a threat of a larger wildfire, we were to just monitor the fire.

"Tom and I made a good jump landing on the dirt road and after a few hours of cutting line around the tree, we sat back for what we thought would be a few days of easy going while drawing hazard pay and a little overtime.

"It didn't last long. A district crew drove into the fire the next morning and released us.

"The following year, 1970, we both decided to take a few classes at Pasadena City College. One evening during break, Tom and I were both thinking about leaving early, but were worried about missing something critical in class for the upcoming finals. I told Tom that I would stay and take notes and would share them with him the next day.

"When I got home from class that night, I found out that the dispatcher tried to get hold of me for a fire assignment with the jumpers. I called Tom to see if he was home and found out that he made it home from class early enough to get the call from the dispatcher and had already left for Redding.

"The next morning the dispatcher called and told me that Tom was killed making a jump into a fire on the Shasta-Trinity National Forest.

"Tom was in his mid-20s and grew up in Alhambra, Calif. Many years later when I was reading the book by Norman Maclean, *Young Men and Fire,* I noticed something in one of the photographs in the book that I found amazing.

"It was a photo of the plaque with the names of the 12 smokejumpers killed on the Mann Gulch Fire in Montana in 1949. One of the names on the plaque was **Newton Thompson** (MSO-49), who was listed as being from Alhambra, Calif. I have always thought it amazing that two men from the same small city lost their lives as smokejumpers.

"Tom was a quiet guy with many great qualities. He was a hardworking and dedicated Forest Service employee who chose a career in what, at that time, we called fire control. There were no movies or books ever written about Tom Regennitter, and I expect that is the way he would have wanted it."

Murry Taylor (RDD-65): Reggie jumped the stick right after I did and so probably died shortly after I got to the ground. A few weeks before, we discovered that some of the deployment bags were catching on the hub of the tail wheel of the DC-3. To solve the problem, a three-foot extender was added to the static line. If you were jumping third man, as was Reggie, you were told to hold the extender in your left hand to

make sure the excess didn't lie on the floor of the aircraft.

In Reggie's case, he dropped the extender early and the slipstream blew a loop in it on the floor. Reggie inadvertently stepped in the loop, tripped and fell to his knees in the door. Instead of aborting the jump, he grabbed the sides of the door and tried to pull himself on out. The static line had fallen into the slipstream. When Tom went out, forward, face down, the mask hinge on his helmet caught in the loop of the static line. When he came to the end of the static line, he was in a head-down position. The helmet flew off and that's when the force separated his spinal cord at the base of his neck.

Earl "Skip" Pike (RDD-68) saw that his jump partner was hurt and followed Tom's descent rather than steer to the jump spot. That was amazingly clear thinking at such a critical moment.

Pike hung up 85 feet in a big Douglas fir, and Tom came down just like angels were steering and wound up sitting upright at the base of a tree.

Vern Stevenson (RDD-62), the jumper in charge, turned Reggie's eyes to the sun to check pupil response. There was none. By the time his canopy opened, Tom was gone.

We had a line around the fire by the time we were replaced by district people. Back at Redding, an investigative team came in from the regional office. They spent two days looking at Reggie's gear; no regular jumpers were allowed around it. After two days they decided to let the grunts in for a look. One (of the grunts) found the waffle facemask pattern on the static line. Then it became necessary to find the static line, which was done by a grid search of the area.

Once the helmet was laid face down on the static line, the patterns matched perfectly. As Reggie was falling face-down, the line caught the hinge and was pulled across his facemask back toward the plane, resulting in his death.

At the tragedy site, Vern had gathered us in a meadow. **Bobby Karr** (RDD-66) was Big Bar Helitack foreman and heard via the radio about the fatality. He brought us two cases of beer. In the meadow we popped a beer and Vern said, "OK, let's talk."

There came a round of "I quits," almost the entire crew, even me. But after the investigation and we could see how it happened, no one quit except his jump partner, Pike. Skip was to be Tom's best man as Tom was to be married in two weeks.

Steven Grammer (Redding '70) – Sept. 28, 1970

Steve died September 28, 1970, in a helicopter crash while on detail with the Redding Hotshots. He was a graduate of Calaveras H.S. in San Andreas, California, and attended American River College where he was a forestry student.

During the summer of 1968, Steve worked for the Division of Forestry in San Andreas and in 1969 and

for the Dorrington Station of the Stanislaus National Forest in Calaveras County.

Steve was one of five men who died in the crash on the Angeles National Forest outside Los Angeles on the fire. The men were in the five-place Alouette helicopter which crashed while they were attempting to establish a second heliport for the 4,000-acre brush fire. The copter plunged into smoke-filled San Gabriel Canyon two miles east of the Rincon Forest Station off the East Fork in the Canyon.

Steve was born July 21, 1959, and is buried in San Andreas, California. His father, Tom, was a deputy sheriff in Calaveras County at the time of Steve's death.

Steve was added to the Sacramento Capitol Park Firefighter Memorial in 2011.

Bill Martin (La Grande '79) – May 31, 1991

Undated obituary from Grangeville newspaper: William "Bill" Martin, 34, of Grangeville, died May 31, 1991, in Missoula, Montana from multiple injuries as a result of a parachuting accident. He graduated from Estacada H.S. (Oregon) in 1975 and had attended Oregon State and the University of Idaho. He is survived by his wife, Kathleen.

On May 31, 1991, Bill Martin and nine other experienced Forest Service Smokejumpers were training on square ram-air parachutes near Missoula, Mont., for an eventual transition from round parachutes to ram-air parachutes in 1991. While very experienced on the round parachute used by Forest Service jumpers, Bill was essentially a rookie on the new square parachute. For unknown reasons, Bill did not find, grasp and pull his main chute rip cord in time and did not release his reserve chute until too late to prevent his fatal collision with the earth. His jump from 3,000 feet took only 23 seconds. A fellow smokejumper observed that Bill had released his reserve, and if he'd only had a second or two more for it to open, he probably would have survived. After the accident, development of the Ram-Air Parachute Program was discontinued.

Murry Taylor (RDD-65): They still haven't figured out what happened, but they do know he never pulled his drogue release. At the very last minute, he went for his reserve. All the lines were out and the canopy would have opened in another second or two.

All the parachute rigging has been thoroughly checked and found in order. Billy was an experienced smokejumper with 234 static line jumps. This was the first jump where he was required to pull the ripcord. The preliminary report indicated that Martin had asked for extra practice jumps off the tower during square training. The spotter said he looked out the door and saw what appeared to be two attempts to grab for his ripcord. Billy fell for 24 seconds from 3,000 feet.

Roger Vorce (FBX-82), base manager of the Alaska Smokejumpers, told us later, "It seems like all of a sudden it clicked for him. He did everything perfectly. He went to his cutaway clutch, then to his reserve. One more second and he would have lived. Two more seconds and he would've had just one hell of a scary ride."

Don Mackey (Missoula '87) – July 6, 1994

Don trained at Missoula in 1987. He died with 13 other firefighters on the Storm King Mountain Fire. Using information from *Fire on The Mountain* by John Mclean (parts paraphrased and shortened): The Missoula crew was eager for work. They had just spent two weeks on a detail in New Mexico without fighting a single fire. They were told they were being sent home but learned they were headed for Colorado when they boarded the plane.

Their leader was Don Mackey, a man known as the "heart and soul" of smokejumping. Mackey was big for a jumper, six feet tall and 185 pounds, with muscular legs built for the mountains.

His fellow jumpers counted on Mackey as a hard worker, exceptionally skilled with a chain saw. But even more, they counted on Mackey for a lift, for his ability to smile, start spinning a story, and turn a nasty fire or a rainy day in the woods into a memorable occasion.

Mackey was raised near Missoula at the mouth of Blodgett Canyon. Don's father had moved his family from Sacramento, Calif., when Don was eight. By the time he was a teenager, he was running his own trap line.

At the age of 34, Don Mackey had a reputation in the Bitterroot Valley and beyond as a hunter, teller of tall tales and a firefighter.

The Twin Otter rolled down the runway at 5:20 p.m. July 5. On the radio, spotter **Sean Cross** (FBX-83) talked to retardant pilot Randy Sullivan, who was flying back from Storm King. He warned Cross that he had seen no place clear to drop jumpers.

Mackay hollered to the others that the fire was in steep terrain. "Steep? We want steep! Give us steep terrain!" the shouts came back. The hot current of an adrenaline rush pumped through their veins.

On this, the 155th jump of his career, Mackey landed on target, the only jumper to do so this day or the next. He was quickly on the radio reporting the tricky winds.

Mackey radioed Butch Blanco, the BLM foreman and incident commander. By then Blanco and his battered crew were halfway down the mountain. There would be no face-to-face meeting between the two until the next day. Mackey and his jumpers, although used to operating alone, now found themselves in a kind of limbo.

With dark approaching, the jumpers switched on their headlamps and would work through the night. The East Canyon was far steeper than it appeared from the air. As they worked, logs cartwheeled down the slope. As the ground grew more treacherous, they moved back to the top of the hill.

Mackey radioed the BLM at 11 p.m. to report that Blanco's fire line didn't exist, the crew had been forced to retreat and the fire had grown to 50 acres. They would need a lot more people. The Prineville Hotshots and a light helicopter were assigned.

On the morning of July 6 the jumpers decided to cut fire line along the ridge top back toward the jump spot. This would give the crew a chance to pull their gear out if the fire made a run.

Blanco and his crew of 10 arrived at about 9:15 and tied in with Mackey. Eight more jumpers would arrive that day in addition to the Hotshots. At 10:23, Jumpship-17 arrived with the additional jumpers. The fire had doubled in size since early morning.

After scouting the fire, Mackey, Blanco and Tyler (helicopter foreman) decided they would build line downhill and direct attack the west flank keeping one foot in the black. They hoped that once they got the fire hooked, they could burn out the unburned fuel.

Once the jumpers arrived at the spot where they were to start building line, they radioed Mackey with concerns: “We’re going to wait for you to come down here and explain some stuff to us.” It was not an outright revolt, but it was stiff resistance.

After discussion and taking into consideration the fire was not doing much at the time, the jumpers headed off the ridge top to build line.

Just after 1 p.m., the first load of five Prineville Hotshots arrived, followed by a second. Nine of the shots headed down the west-flank line. The shuttling of the hotshots was interrupted by the need for a water drop by the helicopter.

A red-flag warning was issued at 7:30 that morning with the predicted cold front to arrive around Glenwood Springs by 4 p.m. It would be preceded by strong winds with gusts reaching 30 miles an hour. That number was later measured to be 40 mph.

When the strong winds reached Grand Junction around noon, the forecast was updated via telephone to the districts. Although the phone message was received in the Grand Junction District, it was lost and never mentioned on the radio network covering the district.

By 3:15 p.m. the rest of the Hotshots had made it to the ridge top where they went to work. The smokejumpers and the nine Prineville Hotshots worked the west-flank line.

At 3:45 the helicopter was asked to start water drops in the ever-increasing fire that soon started to crown. The jumpers remarked that they hadn’t seen flames move that fast since the Yellowstone fires in 1988.

By 4 p.m. the flames swept over the top of the ridge. The 49 firefighters were divided into four groups: the largest number working at the ridge top, the two helicopter crewmen at helispot No. 2, nine smokejumpers working a spur ridge, and 13 (smokejumpers Mackey, Thrash, Roth, Hipke and nine hotshots) working the farthest part of the line. All 49 of the firefighters on the mountain had seen smoke rising from beyond the Lunch Spot Ridge during the afternoon. Many wondered later why this did not concern them at the time.

The fire below the nine smokejumpers blew up; the transition from “normal” to blowup took seconds. Smokejumper **Tony Petrilli** (MSO-89) radioed Mackey telling him the fire had spotted across the canyon and was roaring. He was certain the blowup would gut the western drainage that was designated at the safety zone.

When that group of jumpers reached the Lunch Spot Ridge, Mackey appeared. He and the other supervisory smokejumper, **Dale Longanecker** (RAC-74), agreed that the group of Hotshots and jumpers on the west-flank line were in a bad spot. Mackey had referred to that group several times as the “people working in the brush patch.” Mackey told Longanecker that he was going back to get those people out.

The group of nine jumpers reached a burned-over area a hundred yards below the top of the ridge, where they sheltered up. Petrili checked his watch. It was 4:24.

After Mackey had conferred with Longanecker, he radioed to the west-flank crew to get out of the canyon. That was done at 4 o’clock. Rather than go with Petrilli and the other jumpers, Mackey proceeded down toward the west-flank crew. People interviewed later were not surprised that Mackey made the decision to continue on to the other crew or that he willingly risked his life for the others.

Mackey had been an endurance runner in high school, but his best performance was in the mountains hiking from dawn to dusk. He could “power hike” (walk/jog) all day on broken, uneven terrain.

After the fire an investigator, who was a jogger, made a series of attempts to run, walk, and jog along the line, but ended up tripping and falling when he picked up the pace. The next spring, Mackey’s father, Bob, who had the same physique (long, strong legs), covered the ground swiftly and with apparent ease.

The west-flank crew had started a retreat at 4:04 p.m. but went up the line, apparently not considering the Lunch Spot Ridge as an escape route.

The blowup moved at about 2 mph in its early stages. The three smokejumpers and Hotshots moved at about 3 mph, which is a good pace on the rugged, uphill fire line. Mackey, moving to catch up, was going quite a bit faster.

As they moved on, the steepness of the ridge slowed their movement to about 1 mph while the fire increased to 5 mph, rapidly closing the distance. As they got further up the ridge, jumper **Eric Hipke** (NCSB-90) turned around and saw Don Mackey at the end of the line. Hipke wondered what Mackey was doing there.

Mackey had covered the ground twice as fast as the group averaging about 6-7 mph.

The top of Hell’s Gate Ridge seemed close at this time, but dips and rises added to the distance. They continued to carry their pack and tools, including chain saws. The firefighters working at the top of the ridge darted in every direction; the scene was chaotic.

Smokejumper **Sunny Archuleta** (MYC-77) watched the west-flank crew as they progressed at a regular pace. He gauged the distance between them and the advancing flames and their relative speeds. *These guys are f---ed,* he thought.

By the time the west-flank group had reached the foot of the final hundred-yard climb, the blowup fire had reached a stage where it was burning everything in its path, black or green. The crew still moved in an orderly fashion, with tools and chain saws in their possession. As the line stopped, Hipke moved past Thrash and Roth in an attempt to make it to the top.

Hipke checked over his shoulder and Roth was coming, leading several others. The stop had been costly. The slope steepened to 50 degrees, then 55 degrees. Hipke was using his hands to pull himself along. He dropped his pulaski 27 yards below the ridge top and, as he was less than 10 yards from the top, the heat became unendurable. He crossed the ridge top and moved into the East Canyon.

Smokejumpers Don Mackey, Roger Roth and Jim Thrash, nine members of the Prineville Hotshots and two members of the helicopter crew were lost that afternoon.

For a more complete telling of the Storm King Mountain Fire, read *Fire On The Mountain* by John N. Maclean.

Roger Roth (McCall '94) – July 6, 1994

Roger died with 13 others on the Storm King Mountain Fire.

Following are reminiscences of and tributes to Roger Roth by his fellow McCall smokejumpers: Roger was born Dec. 17, 1963, in L'anse, Mich., son of Walter and Carol (Haanpaa) Roth. He grew up in L'anse and was a 1982 graduate of L'anse High School. After attending Northern Michigan University for a year and a half he joined the National Park Service. For the next seven summers, he was a trail crew leader at Isle Royale National Park.

Roger spent several winters fighting fires in Florida. Two of those seasons were at Big Cypress for the Park Service and three seasons with the Florida Panther Refuge in Naples. He also spent one summer working on the Arrowhead Hotshot Crew at Sequoia-Kings National Park. He was a private helicopter pilot and a master mechanic.

He enjoyed parachuting, the outdoors and helping people. Smokejumping allowed him to do all those things. He was loved intensely by his parents and family.

Despite working in the West as a smokejumper and fighting fires in Florida, Roger always found time to make it home and spend time with his family. He understood that time and friendship were the most important gifts one can give in life.

The world is a much poorer place with the loss of Roger and while his uplifting spirit and his laugh can never be replaced, his memory can begin to fill the emptiness that is left in his place. In the outdoors, in

firefighting, in friendships that Roger fostered in all of us, we can hear his gentle laugh and envision the cheer of his smile and know that Roger is still with us, making the world a better place.

The thoughts I am about to express represent the feelings of many besides me. Roger worked in many places throughout his firefighting career, touching or leaving a mark on everyone with whom he came into contact.

The first thing that comes to mind when thinking about Roger is that he was a person who was always ready and willing to lend a helping hand. He was one of those special individuals who always placed the needs of others before his.

He was a master mechanic and soon after his arrival in McCall, he became the base mechanic. After work or on days off, if one were looking for Roger, all one had to do was go out to the parking lot and look for a pair of legs sticking out from under someone's car. People would find him there, up to his elbows in grease and enjoying every minute of it.

Roger's love for people flowed out in his relaxed voice when he frequently said, "Just let me get my tools and we'll see if your car can be fixed." It usually was, with Roger's help.

I have come to realize that it is the different personalities and unique talents that make the jumpers what they are, and Roger had a unique personality, quietly going about his business with incredible passion, no matter what the task was.

I can see him in my memory with a smile on his face, sombrero on his head, passing out glasses from his latest batch of homemade wine. Then he would open up and make us laugh when he shared his stories from years on the trail crew at Isle Royale and firefighting in South Florida.

Roger never lost sight of where he came from; his love for his family and his hometown were very important to him. He would frequently talk about hunting trips with his father and their favorite fishing holes. He once told me that he wanted to build a log cabin in L'anse with a big porch and a hunting dog for each day of the week.

I know that would have been one door that always would have been open. I had never been to L'anse or met Roger's parents until July 1994. It was easy to see where his passion came from.

For everyone who jumped during the season of 1994, may we take this moment to reflect on our own lives. Are we living life to our fullest potential? Do we enjoy people as much as Roger did?

Any one of us could have been in the same spot on that jump list as Roger or **Jim Thrash** (MYC-81). So in a sense Roger and Jim sacrificed for us so that we could continue.

To the people who never had a chance to meet Roger, I'm sorry. You will never know his laugh, uplifting spirit, never-ending smile and passion for life. Roger will forever be in our hearts and our minds. Let's not

waste the precious time, but remember the gift we've been given and live each day to the fullest.

We will always remember Roger smiling and quick with a helping hand. He came to us at the McCall Smokejumper Base with a wealth of expertise, knowledge and spirit. In addition to being a firefighter, Roger was a helicopter pilot, a mechanic, and, most of all, a willing friend and companion.

Like few other jumpers, Roger had managed to make firefighting a full-time profession. Thus, his career encompassed the entire continent. Jumping the extended summer season in McCall provided half his career and spanned the western United States.

For a sizable portion of the rest of the year, Roger fought fire in Florida and the Everglades. Roger was valued as a first-class firefighter in both locales, and more importantly, he was valued as a friend and a partner in all of life's adventures, of which firefighting was only one.

Once a friend asked Roger's advice on how to deal with a problem he was having with his brakes. Roger diagnosed the problem and told the friend how to fix it.

The next morning, the friend decided to confront the problem and walked out to his car. But Roger had beaten him to it! There was Roger, car jacked up, with the brakes torn apart! All that was needed was a jaunt to the parts store and Roger finished the job.

Jim Thrash (McCall '81) – July 6, 1994

Jim died with 13 others on the Storm King Mountain Fire.

The following is from eulogies by outfitters Pat Ford and Craig Gehrke: Jim attended Pasadena College on a baseball scholarship and received his bachelor's degree in Spanish and history. While in Pasadena, he met Holly Kliewer. They married in May 1973.

Jim and Holly moved in 1974 to Nampa, Idaho, where Jim taught social studies and Spanish, while coaching the varsity baseball team at Middleton High School. They moved to McCall in 1979 and both worked for the U.S. Forest Service. In 1981, Jim became a smokejumper and a professional hunting guide.

Jim and Holly moved to New Meadows in 1983 where they established the Salmon Meadows Lodge-Warren Outfitters hunting guide business. They had two children, Ginny and Nathan.

Jim became involved in the Idaho Outfitters and Guides Association (IOGA), and quickly established himself as a good listener, a critical thinker and a reasoned voice.

In the late 1980s, Jim helped guide a new and innovative out tter leadership that resolved to achieve four goals: making IOGA a tough professional advocate for its members' business interests; significantly raising standards of outfitter practice; giving outfitters sharper and separate standing in Idaho conservation politics; and working cooperatively within the broader conservation ranks.

Very much at home in the backcountry, Jim practiced what he preached about the responsible shared use of our public lands and waters. Elected president of IOGA in 1993, Jim continued to work diligently for wilderness and outfitting.

He worked for his fellow outfitters, whose businesses depend upon wild places all over Idaho. He worked for himself because his livelihood reposed in unprotected wild areas, such as French Creek and the Salmon River Breaks.

Jim helped beat back congressional efforts to enact bills that trammeled wilderness. He kept alive hope of serious legislation to do what's right for wilderness and outfitters. Because he, other outfitters, and conservationists worked so long and hard by someone else's rules, something of camaraderie for a lost cause came to color these times.

But underneath there was an unspoken bond: they didn't intend to lose the battle. This is how the conservationists and outfitters knew Jim Thrash. They knew his humor, his wisdom, and his steely resolve to do what's right for wildlife, for wilderness and for people.

Jumpers also remember Jim Thrash as a very hearty, unique, and generous individual. Jim jumped for 14 years. He had 217 career jumps and 123 fire jumps. He jumped in Alaska and nearly every western state. Jim had a special love for jumping out of Silver City, N.M.

There, jumpers from the other bases remember Thrash's high spirits, his quick-witted observations and his genuine kindness. While Jim's earnest sense of justice and fair play sometimes put him at odds with overzealous overhead, Jim remained an excellent firefighter, squadleader and spotter. His sardonic humor found magic in the routine. His friendly, easy manner made you always welcome.

Thrash was skookum in the woods. He could hike you until you puked. As a jump partner, firefighting tactician, camping partner, sympathetic listener, and accomplished storyteller, Jim made just about any fire a good deal.

We will miss his humor and knack for affectionate skepticism. We will miss the annual Thrash Bash. We will miss seeing his joy at being a good husband to Holly and a fine father to Ginny and Nathan. His loss remains an unspeakable sadness.

A tribute by McCall jumper **Greg Beck** for the June 28, 1998 memorial service at McCall: Four years have gone by now since I said that last "good-bye" to you, Jim, just before you went out the door over Colorado. At the time, I so envied you getting that first Colorado jump we both looked forward to – my loss, your gain, I thought as I pulled in your D-Bag. Yes, it was my loss, my friend, that night I found out you were gone and I couldn't yet tell anyone, a horrible painful time.

And as strong as people think I am, since then they haven't seen the many times the tears have started when I've thought of you and your family you loved so much.

I've tried my best to give just a little of the love you would have given to Holly, Ginny, and Nathan – tried and failed most of the time, most likely, but how can I or anyone replace the love we lost in your great heart?

I'm not ashamed to say that I'll always love you, Jim – as a brother, a smokejumper comrade, a mentor in the ways of the wild, and especially as a close friend. You were my conscience in the wilderness that kept my Pulaski in check and my eyes open to things I'd never really seen.
You reined me up short when I needed it and encouraged me when I was down. How can I ever repay you for all of that this side of Heaven, Jim? This tribute is one of my many clumsy attempts at that.
I no longer jump, James. Can you forgive me for that? But perhaps you're happy that I'm home with the family that needs me. What I wouldn't give, dear friend, to be able to send you home to yours. I've asked God so many times why you replaced me, Jim, at the last moment on that fateful jump, and why I'm here and not you – a million "whys" with no sure answers.

I'm so certain that you, Jim – just like my father – are near so many times. At roll calls I could often just about picture you, standing there on the edge of reality, trying to engage someone in debate just to needle them and me, irreverent twinkle in your eye, cowboy hat parked 10 degrees off-course, sarcastic smile trying to get a rise.

You always could set the hook that way, got me to foolishly tell everybody to shut up, when in reality you were the ringleader with that look of innocence, smiling "Who, me?"

So what can we do to honor you, Jim? Talk about you around the fire when the embers burn low and the fire in the traveler burns hot? We do that because we don't ever want to lose you, and it's our way of holding on to a friend we've somehow lost along the way.

We honor you by loving your wife and your kids and because we hurt so much for them, we bumble and stumble with words and awkward hugs, and we'd all give our very lives if it would take away their pain. We honor you at our reunions in a thousand memories shared, in countless beers raised in your name, in the quiet reflections we retreat to when it just doesn't make sense, and the pain rises up again.

So now, at this memorial service, we gather the quiet strengths of so many who have shared your life, and others who never knew you but to whom you were kin just the same. We gather all that emotion, admiration, and love, trusting that God can minister it to you and to your wife and your children. You live on in all of us because we will never forget you.

Following are remarks by McCall jumper **Joe Fox** at the June 1998 McCall reunion: I'm here to talk about Jim Thrash. Jim Thrash died Wednesday, July 6, 1994, on Storm King Mountain near Glenwood Springs, Colo., during the South Canyon Fire.

Jim died with 13 others, including Roger Roth. So close to safety, so forever there. Jim leaves behind his extraordinary wife, Holly, and his two wonderful children, Ginny and Nathan. I hope you have a chance to meet this delightful family. Jim is still fondly remembered by so many of us current jumpers.

The last time I talked with Jim he was entertaining another jumper in his uniquely warm way. Jim had a knack for stalking and shooting down some rampaging, richly ironic, human behavior. He then dissected it with devastating logic, seasoned it with alternative viewpoints, and salted it with genuine affection. Always, he roasted it over the res of common sense. Always, he served it up in a feast of stories and camaraderie and humor. At the jump base, at our beloved wildfire camps and sitting by a crackling fire, we would devour his feast of droll observations.

Jim loved to coyly observe the goings-on here at the jump base during the slow times. Jim noticed how, when overhead complimented some jumper on hard work, they would say, “He gives a hundred and ten percent.”

Jim reckoned that, to keep the math square, behind this statement lurked a dark implication that some jumpers only worked at 90 percent capacity. So Jim started the 90 Percent Club and welcomed in 90 percent of his fellow jumpers.

One time Thrash was assigned a particularly mind-numbing, useless, busy-work job. Jim looked up to catch others snickering at his misfortune. Jim, ever even-keeled, said, “A job not worth doing is not worth doing well.”

We still always say that when we are assigned a particularly mind-numbing, useless, busy-work job. Jim’s humor still inspires us to cherish the timeless bonds of friendship forged on the fire line. And Jim’s spirit calls upon us to do the worthwhile work of protecting the wild places in the wilderness and in our hearts, where we can take the ones we love to hunt and fish and dream.

The last time I talked with Jim Thrash, he hailed me over to share another celebration of humorous logic he had just concocted.

Because I long lived in Berkeley, Calif., a city known for its quirky eccentricities, Jim had called me over to ask me whether I knew any “channelers.”

Channelers – you know, those eerie people like Shirley MacLaine, who imagine themselves to be ancient souls journeying through the ages by occupying a mortal body for a life time and then moving on. No, I said, I didn’t know any channelers. Jim wryly looked at me as if a trap had sprung. That twinkle sparked in his eyes and his mouth set in that classic Thrashian suppressed smirk. “Well,” Jim said, “did you know any channelers in some of your past lives?”

So here we are to celebrate on our past lives as smokejumpers and reflect upon those who have passed from our lives. We are to relive past moments with friends and comrades; to recollect our stories; to remember when we were young and strong and our vision and dreams of the future burned with the intensity of the fires we so fiercely battled.

Soon our comrades will fall away from our lives like leaves from a tree. Faded and withered, do these

memories rustle away in the slightest breeze? Have we moved away from that essential spirit? Or do those lives and memories remain an eternity in that vivid, so-long-ago moment?

And what past lives and past moments do we remember? What galvanizing events in our smokejumping careers reside so calmly in the buried depths of our memory, only to detonate so unpredictably? Then that past memory from your past jumper life suddenly erupts and rips you from your present life and transports you back into that brilliant, unforgettable moment.

The time the fire blew up on you on that scorching, hot August day. The time you had to cut down that unimaginably dangerous snag. That time when you were coming on final, poised in the door of the DC-3, eyes focused on the Idaho horizon and feeling so alive. Have you ever been shocked awake by exploding thunder and made to remember all those past moments as lucid as a lightning flash?

Do you still dream that you fly above the horizon in your billowing parachute, chasing the quiet solitude a thousand feet above the wilderness? Do you still dream of steering your silken canopy into a forest meadow rioting with wildflowers?

So then, why did you quit smokejumping? It certainly wasn't lack of adventure. Was it chasing that one endless, Alaskan tundra fire where the only relief from the swarms of mosquitoes was the acrid smoke that stung your eyes and burned your throat? Was it too many all-night digs on the Salmon River Breaks where your muscles cramped and ached? Was it that particularly arduous pack out of Chamberlain Basin? A torture so prolonged and intensely vicious that it remains incomprehensible to others? So unbelievably cruel in weight, terrain and weather.

If those were the best of times, why did we leave it behind? When did it become a past life?

We each have a hundred reasons we leave those past lives. We must move on and invest in those dreams and visions of our youth. But that past life remains still so eternally young and enchanting. Our past gives us the strength and courage to face the future with the same bravado we once held for that long-ago, Salmon River gobbler.

It's time now for us all to lift that smoky veil. Step into those memories. Step side-hill across the ashen moonscape. See the distant jumper camp. Your duty is done on this fire.

Time to sit with the jumpers by a crackling fire and devour this feast of life. Time to eat and eat and laugh and laugh until the hard day on the fire line fades into a comforting starry night ... while waning flames lap at the summer moon that swims through the silvery smoke. And a thousand glimmering coals stare from the dying wildfire.

Time to share our joy and our rapture.

I will tell you who still lives in my past lives and who sits telling stories at that eternal campfire, who lives now in the hearts of each of us wildfire warriors. There sits Thrash stalking and shooting down some ram-

paging, richly ironic human behavior.

Jim Thrash, you will always be a part of our lives. You will always dwell in those past memories. You will always guide your silken parachute into that forest meadow of rioting wild owers where we await your friendship and wisdom. Your spirit will always soar when smokejumpers congregate to fly to their memories, their past lives, their sharp-edged adventures, and when they share the rapture of their stories of camaraderie and humor.

I want to welcome all of you back to your memories and your past lives and your youth that strode with the same vigor and erce strength that never left your hearts. Your sharing of stories and camaraderie and humor best eulogizes those that died doing our proud work. All jumpers are unique and kind. When you share the spirit of smokejumpers with others, you welcome in my friend, Jim Thrash.

David John Liston (Fairbanks '98) – April 29, 2000

David was 28 and a third-year jumper for the Bureau of Land Management's Alaska Fire Service when he died on Fort Wainwright near Fairbanks. He was on a refresher jump and his parachute failed to open.

Born April 17, 1972, in Portland, Ore., he attended Gladstone High School, then Clackamas Community College in Oregon City in 1991 and 1992. He began firefighting on the Deschutes National Forest in 1993, and then traveled to Alaska in 1995 to work with the Alaska Fire Service as a member of the Midnight Sun Hotshots.

He remained with that crew until the following year when he was recruited to train aspiring hotshots as a squad boss on the North Star Fire Crew. His goal since he began firefighting was to become a smokejumper, and he was selected for the Alaska smokejumper program in 1998.

Liston's interests included snowboarding, camping, fishing and exploring. He loved the freedom and openness of Alaska. He and his wife, Kristin, had just purchased property in the North Pole area prior to his death.

His fellow jumpers remember him for his free spirit, positive attitude, and always doing more than what was expected. His family takes comfort in that he passed away doing something he loved.

Fellow jumper **Mike McMillan** (FBX-96) wrote the following tribute to his fallen friend: He braced his hands beneath the small round window and stood in the crowded twin-prop airplane. He wiped the sweat from his eyes and snapped the chinstrap on his helmet into place. His heart pounded as he tightened his leg straps. He had never felt this nervous before a practice jump.

"Two jumpers!" boomed the spotter at the open door. Three thousand feet below the circling ship, Dave's girlfriend waited in a meadow known as the "Big Spot."

Kristin shaded the summer sun from her face and squinted at the plane. Standing among a crew of smokejumper trainers, she quietly wondered why her boss told her to take the morning off just to watch

Dave jump. Kristin's three friends from work seemed filled with giddy anticipation on the winding drive through the hills above Fairbanks.

"Get ready!"

The spotter's hand came down on Dave's shoulder, and he threw himself into the wind stream. Seconds later he pulled the green handle from his harness, sending his parachute to the sky with a loud crack. He drew in several deep breaths and fixed his eyes on the jump spot.

Minutes later he turned upon final approach, sinking below the treetops. The wind faded near the target. Dave knew his landing would be rough. His boots hit first as he tucked into a tight roll. His helmet hit next, the impact filling his metal facemask with dirt.

Dave's parachute draped around him as he struggled to his feet. He hurried to free himself from his heavy jumpsuit. His hands worked at buckles and zippers as Kristin slowly walked toward him. Her eyes met his with a curious and beautiful smile.

Without a word, he took her by the hand, the two of them wading through a sea of wild Alaska roses. The last of the jumpers landed as the gallery of onlookers turned their attention toward the young couple. Dave steadied himself on one knee and pulled a small white box from his fire shirt pocket. Kristin rested her hand on his shoulder and knelt closer as he proposed to the love of his life. Kristin had carried her answer in her heart for years, feeling that Dave was unlike anyone she had ever known. His gentle spirit filled her life with happiness. They embraced and kissed sweetly, oblivious to the heartfelt applause rising from their family of friends.

Dave's journey to smokejumping began in the Sisters Wilderness of Oregon on an engine crew in 1993 and 1994. He joined the Midnight Sun Hotshots in 1995 and became an important part of an Alaska crew known for its fire line grit and toughness. Dave was a squad boss with the North Star fire crew in 1997. That fall he was chosen as a rookie candidate by the Alaska Smokejumpers.

He trained alone as he did for years as a state champion wrestler from his hometown of Gladstone, Ore. Now running in the sub-zero temperatures of Girdwood, Alaska, he put hundreds of miles behind him with his distinctive toe-heavy trot. He did thousands of pull-ups on a homemade bar inside the small cabin he and Kristin shared. She worked toward her nursing degree in nearby Anchorage.

During rookie training Dave impressed his instructors with an unshakable resolve to give them his all. Late in the three-week program, the group went for an "Indian-run," a single-file formation in which rookies are quizzed by their trainers.

Looking for a break from his standard list of questions about parachuting procedure, geography and jumper folklore, lead trainer **John Lyons** (FBX-90) was sure he had his rookies stumped.

Lyons thought of his rare pedigreed hunting dog, now just a clumsy longhaired puppy. He called the first

rookie to the front of the line.

"O'Brien, what kind of dog do I have?"

"Uh, some kind of spaniel?" Mike answered, puzzled and out of breath.

"No. Give me twenty." O'Brien dropped out of line and hit the dirt. Humphrey sprinted to fill his place.

"Humphrey, what kind of dog do I have?"
In his Texas drawl Ty slowly confessed he had no idea.

"Give me twenty," snapped Lyons. Ty fell out and began his push-ups. Dave sprinted to fill the gap. "Liston! What kind of dog do I have?"

A wry grin crept across Dave's face as he looked in the eyes of his lead trainer. "A mutt?" Lyons contained his laughter long enough to calmly reply, "Get back in line, Liston." Dave had earned his push-up reprieve.

Dave spent his rookie fire season first jumping fires in Alaska, and then in the rugged wilderness surrounding Winthrop, Wash.

On a salmon fishing trip that summer, Dave and two jumpers took leave to float down the Gulkana River in Alaska's Interior. As thunderstorms moved closer, only **Robert Yeager** (RDD-92) was catching any fish. Veteran jumper **Rod Dow** (MYC-68) thought for sure he'd at least catch a cold.

A wind-driven rain pelted their faces, lulling the trio into miserable silence. Dave suddenly looked at his two friends and yelled from the front of the boat, "Man, is this great or what?"

They pondered their situation and the source of Dave's cheer as they sought shelter beneath a large white spruce.

Dave returned as an Alaska Smokejumper in the spring of 1999, then traveled south to jump fires out of West Yellowstone, Mont., near the end of the season.

In the fall, Dave and Kristin lived in Rainbow Valley outside of Anchorage. A wind-powered generator and solar panels illuminated their small cabin. They fed their wood-burning stove for cooking and heat. During the winter freeze, they punched through the ice to fill water jugs from a fast-moving stream that ran through their yard. Dave built a shelter downslope where he often sat for hours in his poncho, whittling sticks, soaking up life in a land that felt like home.

That winter they welcomed a visit from Dave's father. John Liston flew lead planes for the Forest Service, guiding retardant bombers to their targets for seven seasons until 1996.

During a long walk through the snow-covered valley, Dave told his father he couldn't imagine being happier. He lived in a beautiful place. He loved his wife with his heart and soul. He looked forward to fire season and being a smokejumper again. Dave said he was living his dream.

John was moved by the emotion in his son's words and the bond Dave and Kristin shared.

Under sunny skies on April 8, 2000, Dave and Kristin were married in Welches, Ore. They returned to their Rainbow Valley cabin before driving to Fairbanks to prepare for the fire season. Dave and Kristin bought two acres of land near the Chena River and planned to build a cabin when the time was right.

Dave sang "Happy Birthday" to his wife April 29, kissed her and left for work. He was excited about the practice jumps scheduled for the day.

Dave and seven fellow jumpers made the first of two jumps into a soggy meadow. Icy brown water soaked through their heavy boots as they bagged their canopies and headed back to the base. They secured fresh parachutes to their harnesses for another jump.

The jump ship flew 3,000 feet over the "River Road" spot and began dropping sticks of two jumpers. As the eighth man on the load, Dave was the last to leave the plane. He exited and pulled his green handle, but his main parachute stayed locked in its container. Falling toward Earth he pulled the bright red handle on his reserve, releasing the spring-loaded parachute. What happened next can never be known with certainty.

Dave's reserve canopy became tangled in a rare malfunction. Cries from trainers at the jump spot filled the air. "Open!" "Open!" "No!" "No!"

Disbelief gave way to numbing despair. Dave Liston was gone.

Operations were suspended as experts from the Alaska and Boise smokejumper units and the parachute industry searched for answers. One conclusion drawn was that part of the deployment system on Dave's harness was wet from his first jump of the day. A key piece of equipment may have frozen in the 28-degree temperature recorded inside the orbiting plane at jump altitude.

Several simple but significant modifications were completed before the BLM would return to jump status more than two months later.

Jumping fires was hard to imagine in the wake of losing Dave.

A memorial at the Big Spot drew hundreds of people celebrating his life. A jump ship raced overhead across a clear blue sky, leaving a single yellow streamer fluttering to the ground.

Kristin began the hardest year of her life. She returned to school in Anchorage for the winter, living with close friends of hers and Dave's. Kristin's faith in God inspired those near her. It was a faith she and Dave shared throughout their friendship, love and marriage.

In the spring of 2001 the Alaska Smokejumpers sledded a granite boulder into the forest where Dave fell. They built a foundation to hold the large stone in place and mounted a metal plate on its face, bearing an engraved eulogy to their fallen friend.

Kristin returned to Fairbanks April 29 to spend her birthday with the Alaska Smokejumpers. They gathered at the memorial and stood quietly beneath the black spruce.

Kristin made a cross from tree branches and set it at the base of the stone. **Oded Shalom** (FBX-95) passed paper cups and water canteens in both directions. He spoke of renewal and healing in a shaken voice, his dark eyes swollen with tears.

He described spring as the first chance for trees to draw life from the thawing ground. The water they held came from birch trees tapped just days before. They toasted to their brother with a hint of sweetness in their cups. And Dave smiled upon the small group of people in the woods.

Author Mike McMillan can be reached at spot reimages@yahoo.com.

Luke Douglas Sheehy (Redding '09) – June 10, 2013

Redding smokejumper Luke Sheehy was killed around 5 p.m. Monday, June 10, while working on a lightning-caused fire on the Modoc National Forest Sheehy was working on the Saddle Back Fire in the Warner Wilderness near Alturas. He was hit by part of a falling tree.

From the memorial event program: Luke Sheehy could never get enough action. He was active from the start. Whether it was hunting, fishing, dirt biking, motorcycling, snowmobiling, mountain biking, road bikes, logging or general overall fitness, he enjoyed it all.

"People usually have valleys and peaks in their life," said Redding smokejumper **Luis Gomez** (RDD-94), "but for Luke there were no valleys. He danced from peak to peak."

His biggest passion was smokejumping, which he started in 2009 for the U.S. Forest Service smokejumpers in Redding, Calif. Luke excelled in the smokejumper program due to his candor and work ethic. These were key parts of rookie training for smokejumpers and were integral parts of the Region 5 program.

"His love of life and love for the people around him made him easy to be around," said his friend Aaron Burrough. "These qualities allowed him to excel at whatever adventure he decided to tackle. He was extremely family-oriented and selfless. To sum Luke up in one word, he was 'genuine.' "

Luke was not one to be boxed in. In addition to his active lifestyle, he enjoyed playing numerous musical instruments.

"Put me in a box; I will just kick my way out of it," fellow smokejumper **Joe Maggio** (RDD-09) reported

Luke saying. “He was genetically designed to be a smokejumper. He was the only guy driving a Cummings diesel with Simon and Garfunkel coming out of the window.”

Before becoming a smokejumper, Luke worked for the Diamond Mountain Hotshots with the Bureau of Land Management and as a re ghter for Cal Fire.

Luke attended Lassen High School and received a certificate from the Shasta College Fire Academy. He is survived by his parents, Doug and Lynn Sheehy of Susanville, Calif.; his sisters, Meg and Kate; and a large extended family.

Scott “Mouse” Warner (RDD-69): **“Gordon Brazzi** (RDD-66) called with the news about 30 minutes ago. I was coming through Alturas yesterday on the way back from the McCall Reunion at about 1445 with thunderheads all around and hot down strikes to the south and mentioning to my dad that the jumpers would sure be busy. Ironic indeed.

“I actually came to know Luke quite well over the last 3-4 years from: the last night at the Redding Rookie Camp, Rookie Parties, T-Parties, going by the Redding Smokejumper Base, and him helping outfit our NSA California Trails Projects.

“Just a few weeks back at 2013 rookie camp, Luke came up the rock-filled road to pick up **Murry Taylor** (RDD-65), **Ralph Ryan** (RDD-77) and me. A bit later, I eagerly went with him to watch the 10 rookies saw down a fresh snag about 38-40 inches on the stump with trainer **Gerry Spence** (RDD-94). On the way up the hill, I told Luke that the story would be that I am the chief forester who likes to come out unannounced. Gerry Spence went along with it and introduced me to the rookies. Some of the ‘rooks’ probably still believe it.

“We three gleefully supervised the rookies, counseling that the undercut should have been deeper and coaching them to keep the handles from drooping: ‘Let the saw sing and your balls swing,’ and so on. Luke videoed the tree coming down with his phone.

“He and I spoke often during the last few years about the USFS Falling Certification for NSA Trail volunteers and smokejumpers alike. Although Luke worked previously for his uncle’s logging company out of Chester, he was just classified as a ‘B’ faller. We laughed a lot about that, with the funding to send Luke to the certification finally being recently lined up.

“Luke was a cooperative and very practical, archetypical smokejumper, junior-overhead type, who was good with training and mentoring rookies and more junior jumpers, fitting in just right with his peers and overhead, could hold his liquor, not too loud, and sure as hell knew the odds of being a logger and jumper, and keenly aware about working safely yet efficiently – not safety by rote and guide books.

“We happened to have talked about it a lot from a forestry, logging, smokejumping, and firefighting perspective. Luke would be the very first to acknowledge that it could happen to anybody, which includes all of us. We laughed more than once with my sardonic observation that the only way out was ‘to be a lop, doing nothing.’

"Yet Luke, more than any others, gave me the feeling by word and deed that his generation of smokejumpers have accepted the USFS of today for what it has become, more than we older types have, yet are committed to maintaining high standards as a way forward to improvement and, after all, there is a job to do.

"Luke was single, in his late 20s, had a place and some acreage near Anderson. He was respected and liked by all – now forever in his prime and 'doing the best job in the world,' which he told me last summer when we were organizing the NSA gear during a fire bust.

"Jumpers away, Luke, on your last jump. See you at the 'Last Jump Site' for all of us, in due course."

Aaron Burrough, Luke's friend, had this to say: Luke was born in Susanville, Calif., an area of majestic mountains lined with pine trees, bordered by the high desert and wide-open spaces. He was drawn to the outdoors and all the activities associated with it: hiking, trail running, fishing, hunting, mountain biking, snowmobiling and motorcycle riding.

He did it all. It's no surprise he ended up pursuing the adrenaline-filled career of a smokejumper.

Throughout his childhood, so many loving friends and family surrounded Luke. This is what helped shape him into the man we all loved and deeply cared for. He was very easy to be around, and he respected people for who they were. He was not one to pass judgment. His personality and oversized grin were infectious. Luke was "genuine."

I had the pleasure of meeting Luke early in his firefighting career. It didn't take long to figure out Luke was the guy everybody wanted to work with. You couldn't help but be drawn to him. He was always having fun, but he was also an absolute workhorse.

Throughout the toughest assignments, he always had a smile on his face. He loved what he was doing. He lightened up the whole group and allowed us to become a very tightly-knit and efficient crew.

I truly enjoyed working with Luke, but the memories of him I cherish the most are those away from work. Over the years we became very close friends. I consider Luke a brother. Not a day went by that we didn't communicate in some form or fashion. It was pretty easy since we lived about 400 yards from each other. My family and I could always count on Luke to show up for dinner. When he was gone on a fire or out of town visiting family, the kids couldn't figure out why Luke wasn't there to eat.

Whether it was chores or just hanging out in the back yard, we were always together. It didn't matter if it was his place or mine; knocking was not necessary. We had developed a relationship in which formalities were unnecessary. We could just walk into each other's home and feel at ease.

In fact, sometimes he would be there when we got home, just waiting for us to show up. It was as if he had always been there, part of the family, and we couldn't imagine it any other way.

I have so many fond memories of Luke. We loved sitting on the back deck, playing guitar with Ira, another good friend of ours who also lives in the neighborhood. In fact, we decided to name our three-man band “Rat Farm,” after a place where we would often hunt for ducks.

Luke was a very talented musician and could play multiple instruments. He was the only reason I ever picked up a guitar. The gift of music he gave me is something I will cherish the rest of my life.

We spent a lot of time hunting for deer in the Trinity Alps together. We would beat ourselves up hiking cross-country in search of the ultimate spot to find a huge buck. He loved the silence of the wilderness and sharing a sip of whiskey with a good buddy, high on a ridge, in the middle of nowhere. There are just too many good memories to list.

It has been very hard for my family and me to accept the loss of Luke. However, his passing has allowed many people in the firefighting family, and Luke’s family, to become very close to us. I have no doubt these bonds that have been created will last as long as we live.

This is proof that Luke’s spirit is alive and well in all of us. It is amazing how he touched so many of our lives in such a profound way. Luke Sheehy has forever changed my life, and for that I am grateful.

From Murry Taylor: Rain clouds moved in from the south that morning and a few showers had already fallen. By 8 o’clock people were gathering to get organized. By 10 o’clock fifty fire trucks and Hotshot crew rigs began staging in the west parking lot. By 11 a.m. the bagpipes and drums – 12 remen and ex-firemen from Cal Fire and the Forest Service – were practicing with the combined color guards of the Forest Service, the Bureau of Land Management, Cal Fire, the Redding Fire Department and the National Park Service.

Old smokejumpers – organized by the NSA – met in the auditorium to receive their instructions on how to behave themselves and be good ushers. Just before the 1 p.m. starting time everything came together at the entrance to the center.

Fire trucks and Hotshot rigs lined the roadway on both sides. Three hundred uniformed fire personnel stood shoulder to shoulder in front of their rigs. At the front two ladder trucks had angled their ladders together to form a giant “A,” from which hung a 30-by-50-foot American flag.

At 1 o’clock sharp a 12-car motorcade bearing Luke’s family and friends entered and passed beneath the flag as hundreds of firefighters snapped a crisp salute and held it while the motorcade passed by.

All I can say is that Luke Sheehy’s memorial service was extraordinary in every way imaginable. There were around 1,500 people there – many in full-dress uniform – fire trucks from throughout the North State, the color guards, bagpipes and drums, and a great video/slide presentation of Luke’s life.

Best of all were Luke’s family and friends. After a brief introduction, Luke’s father, Doug, took the lead and set the tone by having the entire audience repeat a line from a poem that began with the words, “I will

not die an unlived life."

There followed songs by his dad, family and friends, plus special words from his mother and sister. A dozen people rose and spoke about Luke's personality and being. There were a lot of tears. The whole program was an emotional and powerful testimony to a wonderful family and the great heart within the firefighting community.

To cap it off, there was a traditional smokejumper Big Flip at the barbecue across the river that afternoon. There were 102 entrants at $40 per head. All the proceeds were to go to the family.
After second-round buybacks, the total was about $4,500. The prize for the winning flipper was five of those great chain-saw carvings – a raccoon, an eagle, and three bears – that Redding smokejumper **Mitch Hokanson** (RDD-00) makes.

From 102, the flip went down to 52, in the first round, then to 25, then to 12, then to six. By the sixth round only three people remained. One was Luke's Dad, Doug. A man threw first and got a head, a woman threw second and got a head, and we all knew that if Doug could throw a tail he would win it all. Everyone got excited and started chanting, "Doug, Doug, Doug, Doug ..."

Doug smiled, looked at the sky, threw the quarter and – even in all the noise – you could see by the look on the judge's face that he'd thrown a tail. Doug was immediately mobbed and danced around and around for two minutes. Let me tell you, it was magical. Absolutely magical.

Not long after the flip it got completely dark, the beer ran out, and it began to rain hard. Soon everyone was gone. The day we came together to mourn Luke's passing was a painful and sorrowful one, for sure. But it was a beautiful one as well, lled with love, heart, and the cherished memory of a very special young man.

From **Joey Maggio** (RDD-09): Luke was the youngest smokejumper candidate in our rookie class. If he didn't tell us his age, we certainly wouldn't have guessed it. He was, for his age, a seasoned woodsman. I'll never forget trying to figure out which climbing spur went on which foot as I frantically tried to make sure I wasn't falling behind my rookie bros. I remember hearing one of the "old guys" ask Luke how he was doing and when he replied that he was "doin' good," I thought to myself: "You have got to be kidding me" as his voice was coming from the top of a big ole Doug fir. I looked around and luckily all the rest of my RBs were navigating the base of their respective trees.

It seems like every re Luke came back from, somebody would say something about a "salty" thing he did or something wildly hilarious.

We have been going over Luke stories for a couple of weeks now. The more I think about it, and as highly as I regarded him while he was alive, it seems that stories just can't do the man justice. He was the best RB a fella could ask for. He would never sell out his RBs for anything, no matter how widely accepted he was with the older guys.

He would give you the shirt off his back if he was having a hard day himself, and if he was having a good day – which was about 99 percent of the time – he would move a mountain for ya, and I truly believe he could.

It's impossible to sum up the man he was, but I can assure the readership of this publication that he was everything, and more, an old smokejumper reading this would've wanted next to him/her in the woods. He would've kicked all of your asses up a hill and come back for more.

He was what you all hope a young smokejumper nowadays would be – loyal, rough, strong, and above all, A BRO.

From Chance Karlgaard, Luke's friend: A hard-nosed, caring man. Luke was a good friend and more-than-excellent person.

I first met Luke in the re academy in 2004. Through the academy and all the years to follow, we were very good friends and had some excellent times together. He introduced me to, and brought together, many good people.

Luke could do or figure out anything that was in front of him and would never turn down a good time. Damned fine man and friend! I'll be holding a grudge that you were taken from us all way too early, but I know I'll see you again someday, my friend. Love ya.

From **Greg Fashano** (RDD-99): Luke was definitely one of a kind. He had a goofy perma-grin and was one of the happiest people I have ever met.

Luke had a style of his own – a fine balance between a hippie and a lumberjack. I would always tease him about his choice in clothing. He would wear flannel, lumberjack-style t-shirts with the sleeves ripped off and fire pants hemmed as though he were waiting for a ood.

Luke was one strong dude. He took pride in running circles around the rookies and made the workouts look easy – all with that goofy smile on his face. He would often comment to the rooks on how much of a slug he was during the winter, as he was leading them into the second hour of calisthenics. His one-liners were priceless.

Luke had a personality like no other. Shortly after he passed his rookie training in 2009, I remember walking by him one day and out of nowhere I hear: "F--- you, Fashano!" which put me in a state of shock. Then I looked over at him with his big, goofy smile and said to myself, "I like this guy." Bold, brave, goofy, strong, genuine – that was Luke.

From **Bob Bente** (RDD-88): Luke was well-suited to be a rookie PT instructor. Not only did he volunteer his time, but he did it with a smile. He had an easy manner about him – it didn't matter if he was on the first rep of the first set of push-ups or the 25th rep of the 25th. He still had a smile and that easy manner. He was bold, confident and sure of himself, but didn't have an ego or special attitude about it. He was just

one of the bros, a smokejumper who, if he was on your load, it was a good thing.

He was one of those guys whom even old guys could learn something about how to function better with a diverse group, like smokejumpers.

From the Redding Rookie Class of 2013: “0800, the rack!” Those were our instructions virtually every morning of rookie training. We would be out there awaiting misery 20 minutes early, and we could always tell how hard of a morning it was going to be by judging the size of the smile on Luke’s face. If he would come out with a big ol’ cheese grin, we knew we were in for it.

He was an outstanding rookie trainer. He dedicated two weeks of his free time to come out and push us. For as kind a person as he actually was, he sure could play hard ass and scare the hell out of us.

He was a machine. He walked through every PT with us and never showed a sign of fatigue.

He was a great motivator. The one thing we never wanted to be was “pathetic” in Luke’s eyes because this guy was so solid through and through. Luke was also one of the first jumper bros to start talking to us after rookie training was over. We all wanted to be his friend as he was such a stand-up guy. He hosted the after-party following the rookie party and invited us all to his place.

He was generous and took pride in us, and we are forever thankful for his commitment to the 2013 rookie class. We wish rookie classes in the future would get to experience the Sheehy strength because it was awesome! We love and miss our trainer, and we are proud to be Sheehy Rookies.

From **Brad Schuette** (RDD-04): Luke Sheehy was one of the best smokejumpers that I have ever worked with. When you got on the airplane en route to a fire and looked down the plane at the load, you would breathe a sigh of relief when you saw Pale Rider sitting down there.

He dug hand line like a machine and could run a saw all day long. A giant hole opened up at our base the moment he left us. He will never be forgotten.

From **Brett Newell** (RDD-12): My first memories of Luke are less than enjoyable; it was about the second or third week of rookie training when the trainers let a few of the old guys come out for our morning PT session. Of course Luke was there and since we didn’t know him yet, he was looking very intimidating. My RBs and I were holding on for dear life, and I was just barely able to keep up with the endless calisthenics when I looked up and saw Luke smirking at me with his trademark smile. “All the way down,” he scolded.

He kept up the “encouragement” throughout the rest of rookie training, all the while making the PT sessions look easy and the runs equally effortless.

Thankfully, the rest of my memories of Luke are enjoyable, and my respect continued to grow throughout the 2012 season and into the 2013 season.

As we drew for the list this year, I was disappointed when I pulled second from the bottom. The only person below me was Luke, but Luke wasn't fazed; he never was. What I thought was my misfortune turned out to be my good fortune. I got to be Luke's jump partner on a good-deal four-manner on the Six Rivers National Forest in early May.

We spent a few memorable days working the fire and trying to stay out of the rain, while Luke kept us entertained with stories around the campfire and continued to impress us with his eclectic music collection. I am grateful I got to spend time with a man I developed such a huge amount of respect and admiration for.

From **Dan Hernandez** (RDD-85): We were working out at the California Smokejumpers weight area, which is about two stages below what inmates might have. There was a tour going on for about 10 or so Fire Academy cadets and their instructor. All of these kids were looking sharp in their uniforms, and for some reason, the instructor had them all in a line at parade rest.

They were standing there for about five minutes when Luke started playing with a big piece of pumice that **Dorsey Lightner** (RDD-89) had brought back to the base. It was about two feet square and weighed about 20 pounds, but looked like it weighed at least 100 pounds.

Luke started lifting it over his head, making it look heavy when one of the other guys said, "Hey Luke, won't you run with that rock over your head in front of the academy kids?"

Luke got this big grin. You could tell he was thinking about it. He grabbed the rock, picked it up over his head, and started running in place. Then he took off in a straight line about 30 yards, made a left and ran right in front of the academy cadets who were still at a parade rest.

Luke ran right in front of them and kept going with a determined look on his face until he was out of sight. The cadets watched Luke run by them in disbelief. The instructor turned to his cadets and said with a stern voice, "Now that's a smokejumper."

Luke came back to where we were at the weights with the biggest smile, and we all sat around laughing our asses off.

From John Houston, Redding Fire Department: Pure ... Luke was pure! Luke never wavered for what he believed in ... not for popularity, not for accolades, not to fit in, or to fit some mold someone thought he should be. Anyone who spent time around Luke knew that he would crawl across broken glass to New York for someone he cared about.

Luke had a consistency, grit, and a calmness to his character that I will never get the opportunity to be around again. It's not common; it was precious.

It came from being raised in a family rooted in love and acceptance – a family whose power shook every person who attended the service. They laid the foundation for such an impressive man early in his life. Teaching him about teamwork, about compassion, and about the beauty of smiling with those you love.

His work ethic never wavered; he never complained; he never gave up, no matter the challenge – true grit. Luke was the friend everyone is lucky to have in life, even just one. He never judged, never appeased – just truly accepted and cared. He was the son every expecting mother and father dream about. He loved his family ... purely ... unconditionally ... just as they loved him. We all have lost someone special in our life, but we all must be extremely thankful that we got to experience someone purely exceptional also. Live like Luke ... our friend will always be young.

Mark T. Urban (NIFC-03) – Sept. 27, 2013

"BLM Smokejumper's Legacy Will Live On" – from the *BLM Daily*

On a cloudless, crisp, Friday autumn afternoon, almost 800 people gathered on a lawn at the National Interagency Fire Center and bid good-bye to one of BLM's best.

A DeHaviland Twin Otter banked to the west and flew over the assembly, dropping a dozen pink, white, blue and yellow crepe streamers. In the world of smokejumpers, streamers are tossed from an aircraft to help determine wind drift and the best place to land.

On that October afternoon, the streamers signaled the beginning of a memorial service for Mark T. Urban, 40, a BLM smokejumper who died September 27, 2013, when his parachute did not properly deploy near the small community of Prairie, about 45 miles east of Boise.

Urban was described by friends and colleagues as a man of many passions and talents – an avid bicyclist, river runner, world traveler, skier, surfer, musician and devoted husband, who was well-liked and highly respected by other smokejumpers. He was also remembered as a quiet person who "simply got things done," said **Phil Lind** (NIFC-01), a fellow smokejumper who was the master of ceremony for the service. "Mark exemplified what it means to be a good man."

Urban was in his eleventh season as a BLM Boise smokejumper. He was recognized within the BLM smokejumper community as an expert parachutist, a skill that led him to train and mentor new smokejumpers. He was instrumental in establishing the BLM Boise smokejumper rookie training.

Eric Walker (NIFC-95), BLM's Boise smokejumper operations manager, described him as an "incredibly bright, extremely fit" smokejumper who helped to establish the BLM rookie smokejumper training program. "He was generally quiet, but when he spoke, we all listened," Walker said. "He set a standard for all smokejumpers."

Derrek Hartman (RDD-98) was Urban's supervisor. He said, "Mark Urban is that employee who is a rare find. You have to look for them, seek them out; they don't care for the spotlight, and they don't want credit, recognition or even the pay. You want that person. We need that person."

Hartman, the father of three sons, paid Urban what may be the ultimate tribute: "As a parent, like most other parents, I hope and wish for a great many things for my children; simple things like doing nice things for Mom, being considerate and respectful of others, doing well in school ... or, as they get older, having great success in education, medicine, athletics or business ... But even more important than that, are the

even grander ambitions I have for my sons, those of simply obtaining and exemplifying the qualities and traits of Mark Urban."

A serious accident investigation team was assembled soon after Urban's death and began the preliminary stages of determining what happened during the jump. The team's report was scheduled to be released toward the end of 2013 or early in 2014.

His wife, Rebecca; his parents, Thomas and Pamela Urban; and a sister, Sara Quaglia, survive Urban. The streamers falling from the Twin Otter not only marked the beginning of a solemn remembrance at NIFC – they also represented the start of a time to reflect on a joyful life lived well and the legacy that Mark Urban leaves to all smokejumpers.

"Mark Urban will be around the Great Basin smokejumper program for generations to come," Hartman said. "When I think of Mark's smile, I think of the quote, 'Those who are happiest are those who do the most for others.' "

Tim David Hart (Grangeville '16)

Tim, 36, died June 3, 2021, from injuries he received May 24 while jumping the Eicks Fire, Hidalgo County, New Mexico.

He was born Dec. 5, 1984, grew up in Illinois and lived in Cody, Wyo., with his wife, Michelle. Tim graduated from Zion-Benton Township High School in the area of Waukegan and Beach Park, Ill., where he was a member of the Youth Conservation Corps. He graduated from Southern Illinois University in Carbondale.

During his firefighting career, Tim was an engine crew member on the Coconino, Fremont-Winema and Shoshone national forests. He also spent time with the Asheville and Ruby Mountain hotshot crews. Tim rookied and jumped at Grangeville during 2016-18 before transferring to West Yellowstone in 2019.