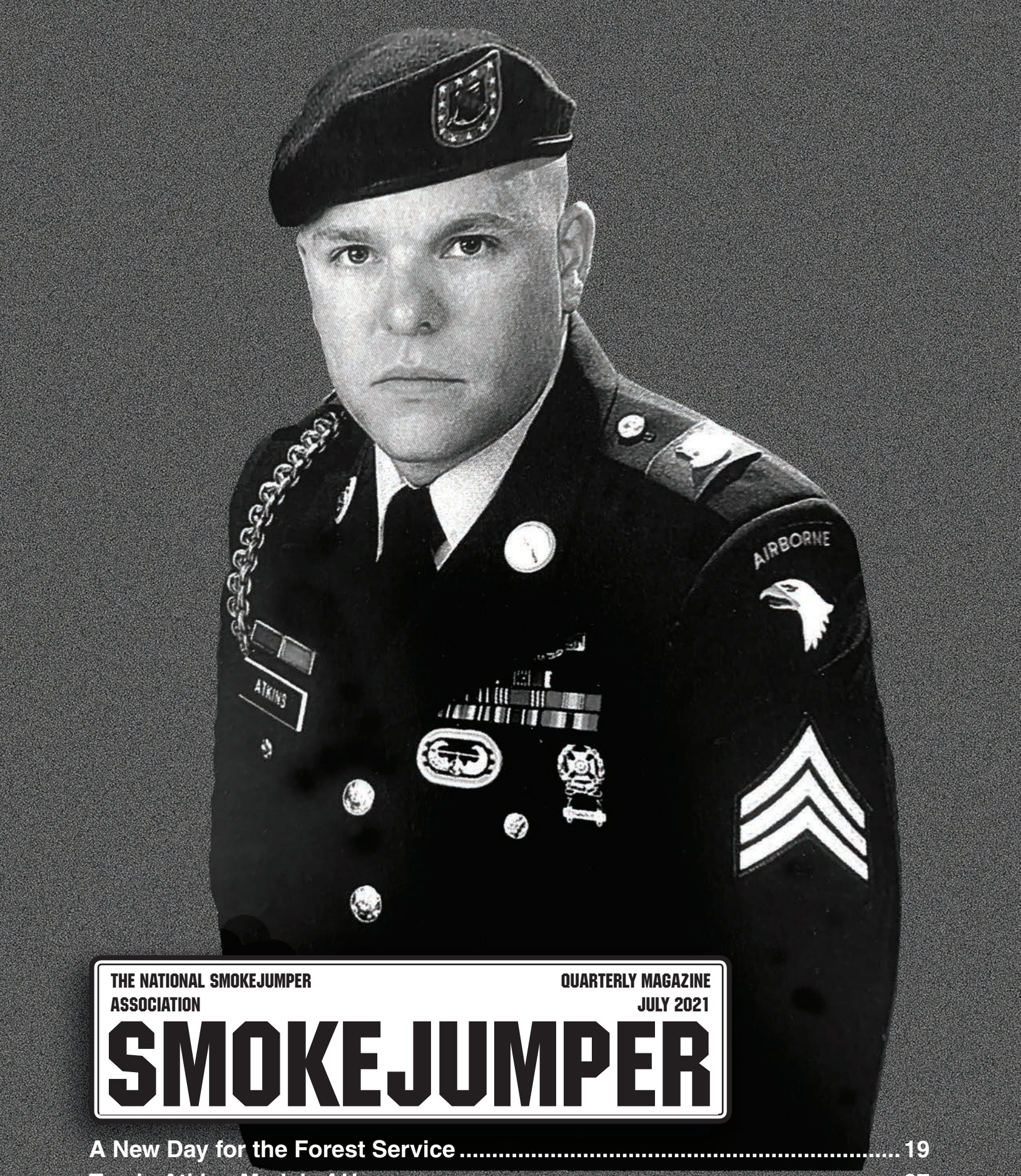

THE NATIONAL SMOKEJUMPER ASSOCIATION
QUARTERLY MAGAZINE
JULY 2021

SMOKEJUMPER

A New Day for the Forest Service 19
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Where Have You Been Hiding D. B. Cooper? 38

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Message from the President

by Bob McKean
(Missoula '67)

As I write this, it's Springtime in the Central Rockies (April 3, 2021). I was skiing on new snow last week. Earlier this week I was wearing shorts. Today, it's snowing again.

We moved to Utah from Portland in November to be near family. I miss the Pacific Marine climate of the Northwest, and especially the majesty of Douglas fir trees, but the Wasatch Mountains are amazing. I love the beauty and variety of the West and look forward to each season. Spring brings with it the glorious sights, sounds, and smells of new life.

Each issue of *Smokejumper* has a variety of interesting, often thought provoking articles. This issue is no exception. In "A Fire Season that Still Haunts Me," Carl Pence, a 40-year veteran of the Forest Service, shares his thoughts and frustrations about the 1996 Wildcat Fire that burned in the Strawberry Wilderness and beyond on the Malheur National Forest.

In "A New Day for the Forest Service," **Doug Stinson** (CJ-54) offers his thoughts for "…sustainably managing the national forests on the 'wet West side' of Oregon and Washington…" This, he acknowledges, is against the backdrop of a warming climate and a topic "fraught with emotion and mistrust between various stakeholders."

It is no accident that the ranks of the smokejumper family are replete with accomplished individuals. Not an insignificant number have led lives of sacrifice, some have made the ultimate sacrifice in service to country. Editor **Chuck Sheley** provides an update to an article written for the October 2011 issue of *Smokejumper* by **Carl Gidlund** (MSO-58) about Travis Atkins, the son of **Jack Atkins** (MSO-68). Travis was originally awarded the Distinguished Service Cross for his actions in Iraq for which he gave the ultimate sacrifice to save his fellow soldiers. In 2019, Travis was posthumously awarded the Medal of Honor.

At 94, **Sheridan Peterson** (MSO-53) passed away on January 8, 2021. Pete was a prime suspect in the D. B. Cooper case; he checked almost all the boxes. Pete's account of his experience as a

suspect and subject of investigation was originally published in the July 2007 issue of *Smokejumper*. It is reprinted in this issue: "Where Have You Been Hiding, D.B. Cooper?"

Keep the Flame Legacy Jump List

The NSA "Keep the Flame" Legacy Jump List was created recently. It is an opportunity to bolster the financial footing of the NSA. I encourage you to consider becoming a member. It is an excellent way to "give back" and support the NSA so that its mission may be continued well into the future. Funds raised through this planned giving program will be placed in the permanently-restricted NSA investment account. The Legacy fund will be managed by the NSA Board Investment Committee as an integral part of the combined investment assets.

For more information about the "Keep the Flame" Legacy Jump List or about making a "living gift" of monetary, property, stock donation, or naming the NSA as the life insurance beneficiary; or placing the NSA in your will, contact Chuck Sheley or Mike Bina at (704) 905-3390 or *beanuh1@yahoo.com*.

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***Smokejumper** base abbreviations:*

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

Having Correct Email Addresses Is Very Important

In order to save the NSA time and money, I'm sending renewals and the merchandise flyer via email. The National Reunion has been **postponed until June 24-26, 2022**, in Boise. I will be sending information on that event via email whenever possible. Sending via email is a good cost-efficient move.

To see if we have your correct email address, go to the NSA website at *www.smokejumpers.com*. Click on "**News and Events**" at the top of the page. Click on "**Jump List**" on the pulldown, type in your ***last*** name.

Please contact me if we need to update your email. My contact information is on the left column of this page. *(Ed.)*

Get *Smokejumper* One Month Earlier

Many NSA members are switching to the digital version of *Smokejumper* delivered by email instead of the printed edition. It is sent as a PDF identical to the hard copy issue.

Advantages include early delivery (a month ahead of USPS), ease of storage, and NSA postal expense savings.

NSA Director Fred Cooper (NCSB-62) says: "I will opt to have my magazines delivered electronically rather than via USPS to save us direct $ in printing and mailing, not to mention your hand labor in processing. I think I mentioned in an earlier message that I'm having other magazines/newsletters delivered electronically.

To request email delivery contact Editor **Chuck Sheley** (CJ-59) *cnkgsheley@earthlink.net*.

A Fire Season That Still Haunts Me—1996 Malheur N.F.

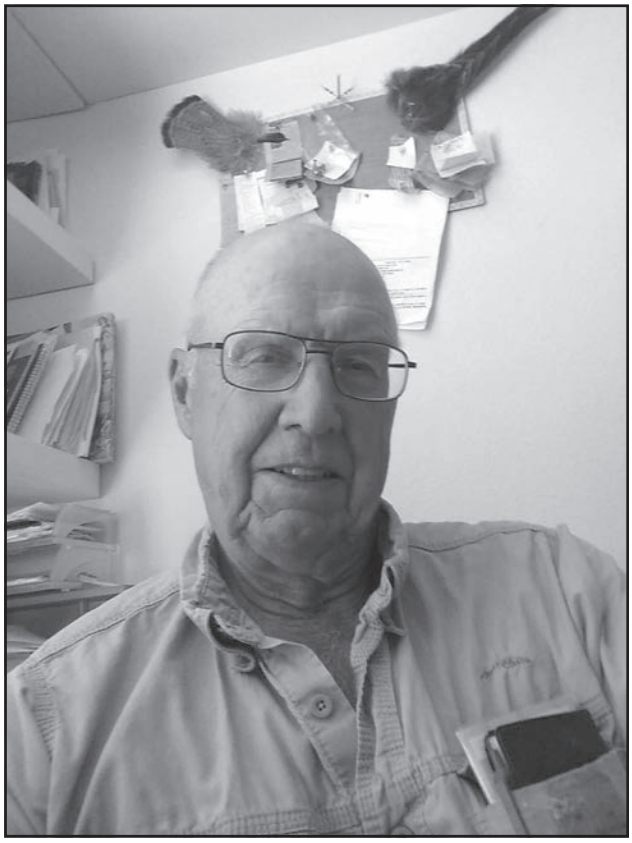
by Carl Pence (USFS—Retired)

During my first summer on the Malheur National Forest, a wildfire incident occurred which includes drama and frustrations etched in my memory.

When I arrived, I found that most of Region 6's Forests had recently composed a "Wilderness Fire Management Plan" for their respective Wilderness. The objective was to allow fire to assume a more "natural" role in affecting vegetation. And, the Regional Office was anxious to have forests manage fires in the Wilderness according to their plans. That's a noble objective as the Wilderness Act's objectives are to allow nature to take its course with as little interaction by humans as possible.

The Malheur Forest has a Wilderness called "The Strawberry Mountain Wilderness." Compared to most Wildernesses in the West, it is not impressive. It is only 69,350 acres. A good hiker can hike from one side of it to the other in a day. It forms a skinny oval about 20 miles on the longest side and about 4-7 miles across the narrow part, encompassing the tops of the Strawberry Mountains and overlooking the John Day Valley. Often the wilderness border abuts private land. The highest point is slightly over 9,000 feet, and it contains some small glacier-formed lakes. Its distance from populated areas and other more impressive Wilderness give this small Wilderness respite from heavy public use.

The spring and early summer of 1996 was cooler than usual. We thought we were going to experience an insignificant fire season and probably wouldn't have an opportunity to use the fire plan that year. A light dusting of snow appeared on the tops of the Strawberries in late July. The next day a series of thunderstorms passed through, and a lightning strike started a fire near the ridge top of the mountains. We labeled the fire "The Wildcat Fire" and decided to apply the Wilderness Fire Management Plan as it seemed to fit the type of fire we wanted.



Carl Pence (Courtesy C. Pence)

High fuel loading is not unusual in most of the western high mountains where mechanical thinning from logging and follow-up management activities were not allowed. And, as a result of the nearly century-long aggressive fire suppression strategy, fuels built up and created a fire hazard and management challenge. That certainly was the case with this Wilderness. Dominant trees consisted of whitebark pine, spruce and lodgepole pine. Most were over 100 years old and had gone through several iterations of beetle infestation and other pathogens. So, the dead woody fuel load was very high.

The plan for this fire was to closely "monitor"

it and let it do its natural thing to clean out the unnatural fuel loading as long as it stayed within the Wilderness boundary. For the first two weeks that strategy worked as the fire crept through the high elevations and occasionally "torched out" basins of thick dead and diseased trees.

However, during the first two weeks of August, the cool weather changed rapidly and turned windy, hot and dry. The fire progressively grew more and more aggressive and expanded to the point where it was forming convection columns of smoke every afternoon and becoming exponentially larger. And, it was getting close to extending beyond the Wilderness boundaries into private property.

These fire conditions were being shared throughout the Region's Forests on the east side of the Cascade Mountains. All "East Side" Forests had fires which were getting uncomfortably large. Those in Wilderness, which had started out being managed, were rapidly being declared "Wildfire." When that decision was made, a specific Type I or II fire team would be sent to contain or extinguish the fire.

I was getting concerned. The predicted weather conditions and fire behavior were pushing the parameters set in our Wilderness Fire Plan. However, the Region didn't trust my Region 4 and 3 fire experiences and kept assuring me that the fire was, "doing just what we want it to do."

On an evening conference phone call with the Regional team, I predicted that there would be a major "blowup" on the Wildcat Fire the coming afternoon and shared that the fire had gone outside of the parameters of the Wilderness Fire Management Plan that afternoon. Then they let me declare it a Wildfire.

My prediction of a major blowup came true as I was briefing the Type II team that following afternoon. Upon seeing what was happening, the Incident Commander (IC) said, "This fire is beyond my team's ability and we need to call for a Type I Fire Team." That IC and I managed a very intense public meeting in Prairie City, Oregon, that night as the smoke column from the blowup covered the small town and sparks from it were landing on us in the City Park.

For the next two weeks, the fire burned aggressively and nearly burned every acre of the small Wilderness and consumed several acres of private land outside the Wilderness, including some outbuildings of a local rancher.

It was an exhausting time for all of us on the forest. Regional and National fire resources were running out and most of my forest employees were involved in some aspect of responding to the Wildcat Fire. Even my wife, Vicki, got involved as a vehicle driver to help.

My fire staff and I were driving to attend daily briefings with an Area Command Team in Ukiah, Oregon, about 60 miles from John Day. They were responsible for determining priorities for resources on the multiple fires is Eastern Oregon.

A large fire on the neighboring Umatilla NF was moving toward our forest, and we could see the potential for it to grow into our forest. One day as we were returning to John Day, we decided to check on fuel conditions and terrain between that fire and our forest. The forest between the fire's head and our forest was loaded with a continuous heavy amount of dead and down fuels.

The next day our concerns were verified. The fire formed a huge convection column creating its own wind and rapidly raced into our forest. The Type II Team's Incident Command Center was in its path and had to move during that night in order to escape. As a result, they became totally ineffective for managing the situation for a couple days.

That afternoon we were demobilizing forces on the Wildcat Fire. Since there were no forces from Incident Command on the fire, we decided to shift some of the "demobilizing" Wildcat Fire resources to the fire we now referred to as "The Summit Fire." The objective would be to protect private land and reduce the number of acres burned.

Reacting to such a rapidly changing management situation in a safe manner proved to be a problem. A number of basic safety rules were not applied. One of the crews that had been on the Wildcat Fire was dispatched to a side of the Summit Fire and did not know the fire had encircled their position. When this was realized, they had two basic choices: move into the "black" or get in their bus and attempt to escape. They got on the bus and ended up driving down a narrow, one-lane road with active fire on both sides. It was

scary and paint on the bus got scorched, but the crew did get to a safe location without harm.

Fortunately, the fire ran out of momentum as it entered areas which had been heavily thinned through timber harvest. Thus, it changed from a fast moving crown fire to a slower ground fire, and the convection column died down. This enabled crews to pinch the fire's head off later that night.

I didn't get back to the Forest Headquarters until late that night. I had some incident closing duties with the IC of the Wildcat Fire and only heard bits and pieces of the incident at the Summit Fire. While the incident could have been much more serious, it deserved to be analyzed to determine the chain of mistakes which led up to it becoming a dangerous situation.

As I questioned my staff about what happened, I got mixture of comments. Some implied the crew involved were not experienced enough and made the wrong decision. It became obvious efforts were not directed with clear objectives, and adequate command control over crews did not exist. All this resulted in disjointed command and control efforts. That's a bad combination and often ends up with safety problems.

The day after the incident, I drove through part of the burned areas with John, the District Ranger. We wanted to get an idea of what happened. Most of the burn on the Malheur side was in highly productive timberlands which had been harvested and closely managed for over 50 years. It included plantations of new seedlings, thinned stands of timber, and some ongoing timber sales. Most of it was easily accessed by past timber sale roads. It also included a cattle grazing allotment. The momentum of the fire scorched about 30,000 acres on our forest that afternoon. Several cattle got scorched in the process, some died, and many were burned to the extent the rancher would have to euthanize them later.

District Ranger John was the epitome of what would be described as an "Old Time Forest Ranger," and a good one. He had been Ranger on this district for 20 years, loved his District, and took great pride and ownership in his active management of its resources, especially the timber aspects. As a professional forester, he had done a very good job of working with the local timber industry to harvest the district's productive timber in a sustainable fashion. Frankly, his actions of the past several years were largely the reason the momentum of the fire slowed and allowed us to contain it.

John was angry at seeing his district burned and felt that sufficient fire control action hadn't occurred on the adjacent forest, which allowed the fire to gain the momentum to burn his district. I heard that when the fire rumbled over the ridge onto his District and consumed one of his lookout towers, John demanded aggressive action and his demands were possibly part of the problem in setting a stage for the emergency, disjointed control activities that afternoon of the blowup.

His emotions permeated others who worked on the Malheur Forest and many people in the John Day Valley. In fact, later that day, I got a phone call from a former Forest Supervisor of the forest who had retired and lived in the valley. After retiring, he worked for the timber industry. He was incensed and ranted that when he was Forest Supervisor, he had similar experiences with poor fire management of the neighboring forest.

When asked by Regional Fire officials if I wanted a formal investigation, I replied I did. I was interested in finding out the causative factors so we could correct things to avoid such problems for the future.

The investigation team was made entirely of Region 6 employees. As the investigation evolved, it seemed the purpose included an objective other than figuring out what went wrong. In my view, there was a preconceived notion at the Regional level that the Malheur Forest needed significant changes in management. Specifically, many at higher levels felt personnel were too involved with timber and grazing resources and this investigation could help reorient management toward a more non-commodity emphasis.

The entire Forest Service was undergoing a significant shift in how it functioned, and Region 6 was at the vanguard of those efforts. These changes were specifically related to strong political pressure from environmentalists. They had recently shut down timber harvest on the forests on the west side of the Cascade Mountains because of the Spotted Owl and other issues in their agenda. The east side forests were now the target after they had such success on the West Side.

Species such as anadromous fish and snag dependent wildlife were used as reasons for dramatically reducing timber and livestock uses. And, the Region was rapidly filling many Ranger and Forest Supervisor positions with people who had a worldview that endorsed the need for change which was more closely aligned with the environmentalists.

Clearly, Ranger John didn't fit that worldview and I didn't either. Before the investigation was completed, I could see I was being placed in the same picture they had of him. We were both highly motivated toward active forest management versus passive management.

The results of the investigation cast a lot of blame for the fire crew's entrapment on all of the Forest's Fire Management Leadership, including myself. Some blame was also placed on the leadership of the Umatilla Forest in their management of the fire as it raced toward our Forest.

Ranger John was singled out as most responsible. The rest of us were included, but less so.

I received a personal "Letter of Reprimand" which directed me to issue a similar letter to my fire staff and the Ranger, which I refused to do. I said the "buck stopped with me." I also got a call from the Regional Forester and was told to "counsel" the Ranger about retiring. John had served with the FS for 40 years and certainly qualified for retirement. The Regional Forester and his staff obviously felt his management style and professional view did not fit the new image the Service was evolving toward.

I discussed the matter of retirement with John, but he made it clear he would not retire until he cleared his name. The Friday evening following that discussion, I caught him as he was leaving work. I said I would work with him in an attempt to clear his name and suggested we meet the coming Monday and figure out a strategy.

That meeting never happened. The next afternoon I received a call from one of my employees who served as a paramedic. He informed me John had a major heart attack and they couldn't revive him.

I called the Regional Forester the next morning and informed him of John's death and reflected that we did suffer a fatality from the Summit Fire Incident. For some reason, he didn't like that inference. The irony of that fire season was I got a personnel award for Outstanding Performance that included $2,000 for managing that summer's difficult fire season. It seemed odd that I got a reprimand and received an award for the same thing.

My stress relative to the Summit Fire didn't end then. Following John's death, I got emotional calls every Sunday evening from his wife who strongly felt John's reputation was muddied by the investigation and wanted his name cleared. I sympathized with her. As I talked to her, it became clear all she needed was assurance that John was a loyal employee and a very good Ranger and was not fully responsible for the incident.

After a couple Sunday night calls, I called the Regional Forester and suggested her grief could be assuaged if he sent her a letter stating that John was a very good ranger and left a professional example of forest management for generations to come (which was true). And, that while he shared blame for the incident, he was only one of several at fault. I even volunteered to draft the letter for him.

After what must have been the sixth emotional Sunday night call, I told her that, if I were her, I would write my US Congressman and Senator about the situation. Within a week the Regional Forester called me and said, "Carl, you said you would draft a letter for me to send to John's widow. Will you do that for me?" He had the letter within five minutes. I had already written it and it was just waiting in my computer. The emotional Sunday evening calls from John's wife stopped.

An epilogue to this story:

When John and I took our drive through the fire the day after it burned, we both saw a good opportunity for a significant timber salvage sale which could amount to about 100-million board feet of very merchantable timber. Before he died, we had started that effort. It would take a full Environment Impact Study (EIS). We would have to complete the EIS and get through anticipated legal appeals before the end of the second summer after the burn in order to offer timber with any real value. Otherwise, the wood would lose much of its commercial value. After he died, his employees were determined to do it for John, and so was I.

Accomplishing that involved a lot of hard

work and conflict, including a phone call from the Outfit's Washington Office the day we were to open bids and determine the highest bidder for the timber. They directed me to not go through with the bidding process. Our arguments lasted a full hour. I explained to them that I needed very good reasons to give to my employees, the timber industry, and the community. Lots of jobs were tied to the salvage of that timber.

Their reasons were untrue and lame, and I challenged them. I pressed them for the real reason for their demands, and they finally admitted that the White House had called and said that the Administration (Clinton's) knew lawsuits would be filed regardless. If I didn't sell the timber, the timber Industry would sue. If I did, the environmentalists would sue to stop the sale. The Administration wanted to be on the environmentalist's side of any lawsuit. I laughed at that and asked them if that was what I should share with the public if I didn't proceed with the sale?

I won the argument and we did the sale. Environmentalists filed their lawsuits. I had previously been through lots of similar challenges and made sure the EIS included iron clad arguments to cover anticipated lawsuit points. The salvage objectives included plans to create a fuel mosaic emulating a more natural fuel condition for the future, reduction in road density, riparian replanting, and reconstruction of bridges which were obstacles for anadromous fish.

We beat the environmentalist's first challenge which was a Temporary Restraining Order against us to stop the harvest pending results of the lawsuits which would take two years. That released logging to proceed before the timber deteriorated. Industry was hungry for the valuable timber and several logging companies cooperated in the harvest.

I was ready to retire but wanted to move from John Day to an area where I could better care for family and was not vested in such heavy personal controversy. Fortunately, the Regional Forester understood, and about a year after salvage operations started, I was transferred to an Interagency Planning Team located in Boise, Idaho.

It was ironic that on my last day as Forest Supervisor, I had to attend a Congressional Hearing Oregon's National Congressmen held in John Day, which focused on the process and decisions. Of course, I had to compromise from the 100-milliion board feet, that John and I envisioned as possible, to half that number in order to get through Regional and National Forest Service concerns. The politicians wanted to understand that and other issues associated with the fires of that year.

Industry gave me a picture of the first load of logs off the sale as I transferred to Boise. Two years later, they sent me a picture of the last load of logs from the sale. Within that same week, I received documentation of the judge's final decision regarding the legal actions environmentalists filed against the salvage operation. His findings denied all of their claims. I felt closure to that ordeal. I retired shortly afterwards after 40 years with the USDA Forest Service. But it was a great and rewarding career which included lots of drama and some heartache.

Carl is a graduate of the University of Idaho and started his USFS career in 1965. He started on the Salmon NF and worked numerous forests over his 40-year career, which "includes some military time and temp jobs on the Challis while I went to college." Carl was Forest Supervisor on the Malheur NF at the time of this article and retired in 2002.

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and Their Families

Send us your Smokejumper or other pins, Trail Crew pins, and/or patches that are hiding in your sock drawer. We'll sell them to collectors on eBay with all money going into the NSA Good Samaritan Fund and acknowledge you in a later issue.

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View From A Spotter

by Tim Quigley (Redding '79)

I was fortunate enough to jump for 36 years. The only semi-significant injury I had was a torn MCL in 2013, the season before my retirement. No surgery was necessary, and I jumped into June 2014 until I hit mandatory retirement. I also got a bruise that encompassed my complete left buttock and thigh but just looked worse than it was. I've often been asked by family and non-jumper friends if I was scared to go out the door. Looking back, I can only think of a jump or two that puckered my backend prior to exiting. I was somewhat fearless when it came to going out the door, which is maybe good or maybe bad. Some fear is probably healthy. The time for fear came many, many times within a few seconds after opening shock: the reality of the buffeting winds thrashing me around, the rocks becoming much larger looking, the trees much taller, the jump spot becoming elusive as well as the alternates, or my head being up my arse. But not on the exit. In the end, I was incredibly lucky to the point where some jumpers thought I knew what I was doing. I don't know if my outlook served me well or if I was just in the right place at the right time. Many times.

As a spotter (as with most spotters, I suspect), I was fairly more conservative when dropping jumpers then when I was as a jumper in the door. You feel more responsibility for other's well-being rather than your own. Spotting can be challenging and frustrating, rewarding and humbling.

Some of us are aggressive and some of us are more conservative. Some of my toughest decisions in life have come as a spotter. It's great when it's straight forward, black or white, when the conditions are clear-cut to either jump it or dry run it. The problem arises when conditions fall into that grey area. Maybe the winds are marginal, or issues with the jump spot, or hazards all around, or a challenging spot with inexperienced jumpers, or a combination of any or all the other "risk versus reward" possibilities. So many things to consider when struggling with the grey areas. Some of my worst days as a spotter and jumper was when a jumper got injured and maybe my judgement may have contributed. The first time it happens to new spotters, especially aggressive ones, the head hangs low and their spotting outlook changes. You feel bad for the jumper and disappointed in yourself. Hell, you can do everything right by the book, and someone still may get hurt. It comes with the territory.

I've misspotted my share of jumpers. I've been wrongfully accused of misspotting my share of jumpers. I've been misspotted as a jumper my share of times. And I've had my share of success stories. It all comes with the territory. I've "dry run" fires as a spotter that I would have jumped. I've convinced spotters to drop me on fires that they wanted to dry run. Bad idea. I've dropped jumpers on fires that afterward I wished I hadn't. It all comes with the territory. It's important for a spotter to show confidence when in the door throwing and watching streamers and coordinating with the pilot. Hopefully, it's sincere confidence but maybe it wasn't a time or two. I've seen spotters show confidence when I know they were lost. I've seen spotters seem to lose it but really know what they're doing. I've seen spotters fail miserably, and some succeed blindly. It all comes with the territory. You track jumpers down when they return to the base to ask them how it went. Even (especially) when you know it wasn't good. And you take your lumps when it's not. It's always nice to get positive feedback like you know what you're doing. You high five them when it went well. It all comes with the territory.

Most of spotting is straight forward. But it is fun to watch a seasoned jumper become a new spotter. Most are a little out of their element and somewhat uncomfortable at first. There is great satisfaction as a check spotter to watch rookie spotters develop into confident, highly regarded spotters by the other jumpers. I trained as a spotter during the time of the FS-12 and spotted many FS-12, FS-14, and Ram Airs. I missed the real early chutes, but I did jump the FS-10, just never spotted them. A popular debate is whether spotting a Round jumper is more challenging than a Ram Air jumper. They are kind of the same but only different, each having some of their own issues. I'll leave that debate for another time.

I have fond memories as a spotter. Every fire or training jump can be a learning experience. While most missions are considered a success, there is *always* something that could have been done better. Keep striving. Be accountable. Be humble.

On Final—Get Ready—Jumpers Away!

GRASSROOTS—CHALLENGES OF BEING A CURRENT SMOKEJUMPER

(Author's name withheld by request. Ed.)

There isn't a single path to being a smokejumper. Many of us were on Hotshot crews, rappel crews, Fire Use Modules, engines, district life, etc. But for many of us, smokejumping was the first time we were able to act independently, IC our own fires, be trusted as an adult and able to say "no" to an assignment.

The elite status of smokejumping due to specialized skills, physical size restrictions, and limited positions available, combined with the increased independence, has drawn many to call smokejumping their career. It's not hard to see the appeal of the job.

Yet smokejumping in 2021 is broken and it has been broken for years. Limited permanent positions and harsh conditions have plagued the Forest Service, causing unsustainable recruitment and retention issues for some bases, with training costs ballooning in the last decade. Long-duration assignments and low pay have exacerbated the mental health crisis amongst our ranks.

The same skills that bring success on the fireline have been our demise at home. Always making do with what is available, never complaining and "doing more with less" are common terms heard daily across federal firefighting stations. Posters hanging in several jump bases, criticizing people for wanting to stay home instead of getting back on the list, are light-hearted jabs from self-labeled "field guys." They pose the question, "Do you even jump, bro?"

But next time you are on an IA load heading to a fire, look around at the stickers on people's jump helmets. It's hard to miss the black stripes memorializing jumpers who have died or taken their own lives. If we had an honest conversation, we would all admit that the only surprise from the next smokejumper suicide would be the name of the individual. Mental health and wellbeing are never listed as threats to the mission of wildfire suppression, but they can no longer be separated.

The housing market booms across the jump communities are staggering. Boise, McCall, Missoula, Redmond, Winthrop, Redding, West Yellowstone, all have seen unprecedented rises in cost of living, and smokejumpers face both income and housing insecurity like never before.

Many with families have hit the breaking point. At my base, I have not seen any GS-6 with a family get promoted to GS-7 in over 10 years. The tour of duty change, 13/13 to 18/8 at the low wages creates a hardship for families. After five months of being on the road and in the woods, with a dumpster fire smoldering at home, the options are clear: take unemployment and reconnect with family, or try for the promotion, working beyond your tour to manufacture equipment without overtime or hazard pay—essentially volunteering your time.

This is simply irresponsible for people with families. Sure, there is always the occasional person who can make it work, depending on several outside factors. But a federal job, paying at or below $20/hour, should not make employees decide between career and family. Currently, it's hard to imagine being successful with both.

The issues that wildland firefighters face within the federal system are many, and the Grassroots Wildland Firefighters are busy mapping out the cracks. Our website hopes to illuminate and educate both firefighters, the public, and legislators.

By adding pay comparisons, people can see the pay disparity between federal and state resources. An engine captain with Cal Fire earns $127,000 vs $53,00 for feds. Over a 60-year career and retirement it's easily several millions of dollars difference. And, while the state agencies recognize wildland firefighters face unique mental health challenges, the federal government Employee Assistance Program (EAP) is no different than what is provided to a biologist working at their desk. When I called the EAP this offseason, I was surprised to hear that even Career Seasonal Employees were not eligible for counseling in the offseason. Even if I were eligible, the three Zoom visits would have been woefully inadequate.

We got involved with the Regional EAP coordinator and provided feedback that led to all temps and Permanent Seasonal Employees being eligible for six-months beyond their layoff date.

The outdated organizational charts that smokejumpers and other modules use needs reform. Why are jump bases seemingly modeled after a Type II crew? When 60% or more of the workforce is stuck at the GS-6 level, while operating as single resource boss up through Division Supervisor on fires, we need reform.

While other state agencies classify their employees as simply "firefighter" and offer promotions with experience, the federal service currently only allows few people to achieve a living wage, while others desperately try to earn enough hazard pay and overtime to make ends meet.

The current reliance on overtime and hazard pay adds increased stress to our workforce. Many times, on-the-job injuries can cut income by over 60%, and a pregnancy is hardly realistic for many jumpers these days. This has led to roughly 10-15 women total out of 450 smokejumpers. I can't name any woman in a supervisory role amongst

smokejumpers. We all know jumpers who've lost their careers and retirements due to jumping injuries, and you never know who's next. There are ways that we can improve the deficiencies in the current system.

A pay structure similar to Border Patrol would be a start, with entry level positions starting at GL-7 up to GS-12 with non-competitive promotions, taking a few years to get to the level of GS-12, a level only a few of us will ever attain for the last few years of our career. Also, guaranteed hours while on a resource order. Many have flown away from their homes to support places like Redding, only to get 9-hour days. This places a hardship on relationships and families at home.

Other proposals include presumption that cancers and heart diseases are due to work-related smoke inhalation. An EAP program that covers all employees and has clinicians who understand PTSD and other firefighter issues. During fire season, we are looking at set workdays of 12-hour days, with standby time payable due to on-call status. We shouldn't be penalized because we are IA ready and holding down the fort at home, unable to earn overtime on a fire due to managerial planning. This Administratively Uncontrollable Overtime (AUO) would be creditable towards retirement pensions.

The time for action is now. This fire season is shaping up to be another taxing year, and without a doubt, federal leadership, senators and legislators will be touring jump bases. This is a time when base management should be asking to offer 10–30-minute briefings describing the hardship our employees face. I've personally been on briefings with several congressional and senate staffs. They are shocked to hear the current conditions, and excited to help. If you would like talking points or advice, please contact us.

The mission of smokejumping can no longer be separated from the workforce that carries it out. Without a focus on the workforce, the fire mission will surely fail. We are all stewards of this profession, and it's our duty to leave it in a better place than we found it.

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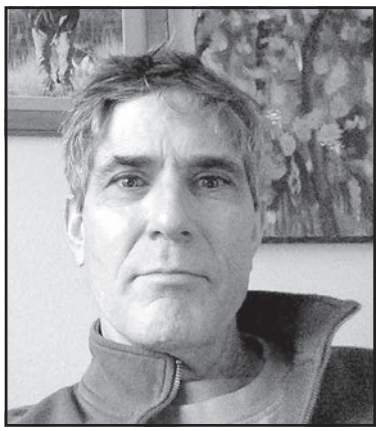
Arctic National Wildlife Refuge Wildfire

by Wally Humphries (Fairbanks '90)

Five of us parachuted onto the unburned tundra near the back of the two-hundred-acre wildfire in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge (ANWR). I threw off my jumpsuit and pulled out the packout bag and stored my jump gear as the jump ship nosedived from three thousand feet and leveled out just above the valley floor. Cardboard boxes fell off the plane's tailgate and round parachutes floated equipment to the tundra.

"That's it for the cargo," **Matt Allen's** (FBX-95) voice transmitted over our handheld radios. "The pilots need to get back to Galena, so they don't break their duty day. If there's nothing else, enjoy your beautiful fire."

"Oh, we will, thanks," I said as the assigned fire boss.



Wally Humphries (Courtesy W. Humphries)

We opened cargo boxes and put food inside personal gear bags and grabbed tools before hiking a short distance on the enormous valley floor. We were soon greeted by two-foot high flames. **Bram Granger** (FBX-07) broke right and swung downward with his tool and beat out flames along the fire's edge. He continued several yards and ended near river brush where an em-

ber had landed from the "let burn" lightning fire across the stream.

Our job was to prevent our spot fire from spreading farther west and destroying native hunting and fishing habitat around Old John Lake. The rest of us chased the fire's heel up a gradual slope away from Granger. As we stood on unburned tundra and struck flames with rubber flaps on the end of the tool's long plastic pipe handle, the hollow thumps sounded like brooms beating rugs.

We were roughly three hundred feet up a steep hillside that looked out at a long, broad, u-shaped valley. At the far end of the seemingly endless valley, the Koness River meandered for miles toward us. It flowed between our spot fire and the ANWR fire, both fires confined by distant foothills that made graceful s-turns with the river. We discussed our slow progress and the great distance still to go and ordered eight more jumpers on the satellite phone. Dispatch confirmed our thoughts—it would probably be late tonight before we got additional jumpers.

Jeanine Faulkner (MSO-98) beat out flames and tied her line section into Dan's (**Dan Helterline** (GAC-89). "I played in a band over the winter," the six-foot female said, "Smokey's Hot Little Bitches." She strung her tool like a guitar and tried to recruit us. Dan wanted nothing to do with her imaginary band. She laughed wildly and attacked new flames twenty feet ahead of him while he worked toward where she just started.

Near the hill's crest, the fire had turned right and contoured several yards along the slope, and then its flames angled down the broad hillside and hit bottom. The fiery front continued up the valley floor and looked like a two-mile long burning piece of straight string, except for its front part that angled toward the river.

I mentioned to the crew that I needed to get around the fire front and find a suitable jump spot for the incoming jumpers that would enable them to cut off the head of the fire as they worked toward us.

"We'll continue to secure the fire's edge but will be hard pressed to put a big dent in it with just five bros," Dan said.

I walked along lumpy tundra a few feet from knee-high flames on the valley floor. In the distance, smoke rose briefly and formed a long white curtain that the wind then pushed up the valley. The stiff breeze let up slightly, then gained momentum and somersaulted over another row of smoke. The smoke pattern continued at the same rate as the previous one.

I looked across the river and recalled a radio program about how the U.S. Senate voted to open ANWR's 1002 area for drilling, but still needed to pass House approval. Supposedly, the section we were in was off limits to protect wildlife from development, but that didn't stop oil exploration from extending farther into caribou calving ground on the coastal plain up north.

Thin wispy clouds made the sky look fuzzy above the distant mountains of the Brooks Range. The enormous valley made me feel small and alone. It felt taboo being in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge—a nine and a half million acre, mystical place, where hairy muskoxen roam as living fossils, and all sorts of brown and black bears. Incredible gull birds like the Arctic tern, and the hundreds of thousand caribou—animal numbers like the Serengeti.

Sparse trees on a distant rise made me think Koness was on the other side. Flames petered out onto a flat area next to the river. The cool evening air influenced local fire behavior. Just upstream from the shallow river, wide level tundra made for a natural jump spot.

I phoned dispatch to inquire about jumpers. The dispatcher reported that the jump ship had tried to reach us earlier. The pilots attempted to fly around wide thunder cells to reach our fire but had to return to Galena before they ran out of flight time. "They'll try again tomorrow."

I radioed the crew and relayed what the dispatcher said. There's no sense in beating our brains out until four in the morning if we were getting jumper reinforcements. We headed in for the night.

I angled up a short incline away from the fire front. Scorched tundra could not sustain flame because no flammable vegetation remained.

We made three trips with our gear to the gravel bar. On a tundra rise next to the gravel bar**, Chris Wennogle** (FBX-07) ripped out a dead tree stump and asked if anyone wanted a fire. At the fire pit, Granger slashed parachute cord around alder poles

for a tripod. Dan commented that he was the good dealmaker in getting this fire in the Brooks Range—as if we were the lucky beneficiaries and backed it up with another fire, he had jumped in the Brooks Range.

"You remember the black bear that chased **Hans Smith** (WYS-00)?" He jogged my memory from a few years back.

We sat around a flameless campfire and quickly ate food from fat boy boxes and MREs, while swatting mosquitoes, small and fast. A distant wolf howled. "That's cool," Jeanine said. Granger and Wennogle pulled sleeping bags from cargo boxes and covered the cardboard with black plastic.

I climbed out of my tent the next morning and sat next to the campfire and drank coffee. I phoned dispatch and inquired about the jumper reinforcements. He transferred me to the fire management officer.

Pat O'Brien stated that the jumpers we were supposed to get this morning had been diverted to a higher priority fire. So much for Old John Lake, "I think we can manage."

I walked along the fire's cold edge, toward Wennogle and Dan. Off to the right on the hillside lay a sun-bleached caribou antler. I wondered if drilling in ANWR would plummet the numbers of caribou like the pipeline construction did in the seventies.

We went in for fresh food delivered earlier by paracargo. "Steaks in the fridge…potatoes in the fire," Dan said.

We told stories about the summer's memorable events and fires, like the one in Noatak, or the two days spent on ten-hour patrol flights. Of all the fires, everyone agreed that this fire in the ANWR was the best. We didn't seem to mind the hordes of mosquitoes, except maybe Granger whose face looked like a deformed alien blob from the skeets caked on his head net.

At noon on the fifth and final day of the fire, I climbed in the backseat of an Astar helicopter. As the ship rocked, I looked out the side window at the caribou sheds next to our rehabbed campfire. The helicopter lifted forward, and I wished the antlers staying on the tundra were ghost guardians against oil drilling in ANWR.

Doug Bell—Missoula 1958

by "Swede" Trodesson (Missoula '59)

In the April 2021 issue of the *Smokejumper* magazine, I noticed a photo of Doug Bell in front of his car. This brought back fond memories of Doug.

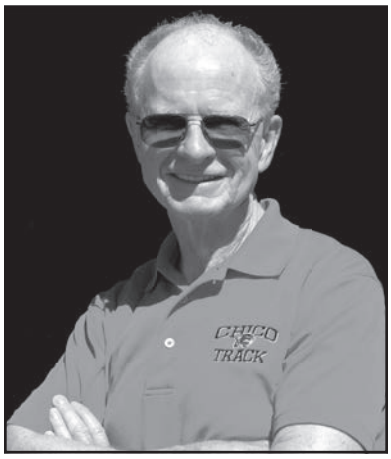
In 1958, I trained with Doug at the Missoula smokejumper base. He was (ahem) a unique individual from Oklahoma. He had a two-door coupe on which he fashioned a custom-made top luggage rack. The rack was constructed of two-by-fours bolted into the side of the car. Additional two-by-fours completed the rack. In the rack were several well-worn replacement tires and some "ratholed" C-Rations to sustain him on his weekend ventures.

On weekends when he was not jumping on fires, Doug quite often would motor up to Glacier National Park to chase the gorgeous female summer employees. On Saturday nights, the Park would host a dance in their main hotel. Sometimes the car would break down, so Doug would have to bum a ride back to the disabled car with a repair part.

Doug wore bib overalls. In his shirt pocket he carried a pet white-footed deer mouse. Sometimes, when in conversation with Doug, the mouse would stick its nose out of his pocket and. after a few twitches of its whiskers, would retreat back into Doug's pocket.

Doug was always full of entertaining conversation. One morning at the breakfast table, Doug was silent. When questioned why he was so quiet, Doug sadly replied that during his sleep the previous night he had rolled over onto his mouse, killing it.

SOUNDING OFF from the Editor



by Chuck Sheley
(Cave Junction '59)
Managing Editor

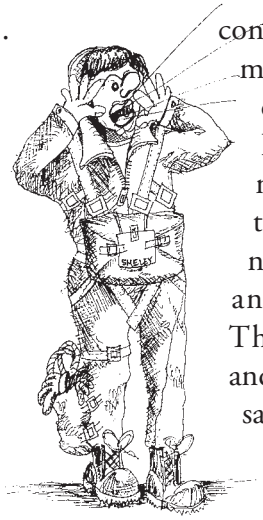
The Sheriff Is Dead

Butte County California, where I live, has a population of about 220,000. We have been hit with over 11,600 cases of the COVID and 198 deaths at this time (May 2021).

When I picked up the local newspaper today, I saw Jerry Smith listed in the death statistics. Jerry was our Butte County Sheriff until he retired in 2013 after 36 years of service. From his hire in 1978, he worked his way up from Deputy Sheriff to the top spot and was selected Sheriff when the office opened up.

Jerry was a Sheriff from the "old West" who did not dress in uniform most of the time. A Stetson, boots and string tie was his uniform.

Jerry's death hit me hard from a couple of standpoints. First, he was only 63 and in good health before being stricken by COVID-19. Secondly, he was a student of mine at one time. I talked to my son, a retired deputy sheriff who worked for Jerry, and asked him about any details.



Jerry went to the local hospital when he was not feeling well. They took his temperature, which was apparently nothing to create any alarm, and sent him home. The next day was a repeat of the previous day. On the third day, he or someone had to call 911 and take him to the hospital. Jerry was diagnosed with COVID.

I do not know all the intermediate happenings, but he died this week in February at only 63 years of age. The last time I saw him was 5-6 years ago at one of the local fitness centers where we both worked out. He looked great, really trim and muscled up.

We ran into each other periodically at the gym, and he always said "Hello Mr. Sheley," or "Hello Coach." Jerry was one of my Physical Education students way back in jr. high school and I was his track coach in the 9th grade. At that time, he was a skinny kid trying to run high hurdles.

I've taught and coached so many years in this area that I continually run into many of my ex-students. Most have changed over the years, and I cannot recognize them as my memory has them pictured as the adolescent and now, they shake my hand and say, "Remember me?" They stand taller than me and are men. I usually have to say, "Help me out with your name."

Jerry and I were talking one day at the fitness club. He knew that, besides teaching and coaching, I also worked for the Forest Service. He told me a Jim Klump (RDD-64) story as we both knew Jim.

Back when Jerry was working the field as a deputy, he got called to handle a problem up the hill in one of the mountain communities. The story goes that there was a father and his two sons who harassed the local USFS women as they ate their lunch outside during their lunch break. The father and his sons would drive by and make crude comments to the ladies.

Again, the story goes, Jim Klump went down to talk to the hecklers and discourage them from continuing their harassment of the USFS women. During the "conversation," the father had a dental problem when one of his teeth was lost when he "accidentally" ran into Jim's fist. I don't know how Deputy Smith handled the report, but the hecklers did not bother the

women after that.

I hear the talk that COVID is a myth and similar to the flu. I've always thought I would like to challenge anyone of these people to work a week in an emergency room without a mask.

We lost a good man, without any previous conditions, way before his time. Sheriff Smith, it was a pleasure being your coach and knowing you.

Anyone living in the west needs to read this closely (Ed.)

Should You Draw The Short Straw

by Tommy Albert (Cave Junction '64)

We, in the NSA, have spent varying lengths of time in wildfire as active firefighters and/or as homeowners in the urban interface. All of us have seen the devastating destruction in the aftermath of a wildfire. Having worked in southern California when the Santa Anna winds were blowing, the helplessness of watching house after house ignite and burn to the ground was daunting. We dropped retardant in attempts to save houses even though the effectiveness was marginal at best. To be truthful, drops were made that had no effect on retarding the fire, but we made the ineffective drops so the homeowners felt we were "attempting" to save their homes.

Never would I have imagined being on the "other side of the fence." I lived on the beautiful wild and scenic McKenzie River just outside of the Willamette NF for over 20 years. Having observed bottoms of drainages escape destruction, when all the surrounding area burned, lead to some apathy on my part even though I knew the "perfect storm" was always within the realm of possibilities.

On September 7th it happened, the perfect storm: a typical dry mid to late summer and early fall, high pressure on the east side of the Cascades, low pressure on the coast producing hot, dry easterly winds in excess of forty mph. Power was lost around 8:00 p.m. when a limb fell on a power line resulting in a small fire. We called the local Fire Marshall at 10:30 p.m. and were told the fire was 18 miles upriver from our house and fire crews were on the fire. He went on to say that, if it became necessary, they would issue a Level 1 evacuation notice, followed by a level 2, before a level 3 would be issued. (Level 1: Pre-evacuation notice – get ready. Level 2: Be set to evacuate. Level 3: Evacuate within 10 minutes.)

The fire exploded as the winds picked up, and we received a Level 3 evacuation order at 12:15 a.m. emphatically stating, evacuate immediately! There was never a Level 1 or 2 order issued. The fire, named the Holiday Farm Fire, traveled over 13 miles in one hour. When all was said and done, the fire consumed approximately 850 structures and, miraculously, only one person died in the fire. There is no telling how many wild animals, pets, and livestock perished.

It was not until five days later that we learned our house, sheds, boat, gazebo, and belongings were totally consumed by the fire. We were not able to step foot on the property until almost three weeks after the fire. To say it was disheartening is an inexpressible understatement. The fire was so hot that it killed 180-foot plus Douglas Fir trees that had been limbed 100 feet up. Nothing but the foundation of the house was recognizable. Just imagine, everything you and your spouse accumulated over a lifetime—gone.

It is worth mentioning that there were nearby structures left standing—three burned and the fourth left standing. In many cases, there was no apparent rhyme or reason as to why those, who had defensible space in some but not all areas, survived. Worth taking a look-see around your property. Anything you can do to not join this "club" is well worth it.

This leads us to the purpose of this writing: insurance. I personally am very lucky in that I was in the military and qualified for USAA coverage. Just as importantly, I married a lady who monitored and adjusted our coverages annually. Without her diligence, we could have, like many did, found ourselves underinsured and out of pocket for thousands of dollars. Everyone who had USAA gave them a Five Star rating. I emphatically agree. I can't attest to peoples' experiences with other insurance companies, but those I talked to with Progressive had

nothing good to say. I can attest to that as my boat and trailer were insured by them.

The McKenzie River drainage is heavily populated with blue-collar residents living paycheck to paycheck. Many were renting with no renter's insurance. Others who owned homes were either not insured or carried minimal insurance. Life, as they knew it, has been forever altered. Many are still residing in FEMA-provided motel rooms and trailers. Some, I am told, are living in tents on their property.

Wildfire events are increasing primarily due to increased development in the urban interface along with heavier fuel loading, be it global warming or just a cyclable weather pattern. You draw your own conclusion. Bottom line, if you live in the urban interface, you need to take a serious look at your insurance coverage and the vegetation around your home.

The information below is provided by an insurance agent who is highly experienced in wildfire-related claims:

Structure: The home value these days is critical to keep up with for the homeowner as home appreciations are rising rapidly. Many companies will include a cushion of about 20% increased dwelling limit, meaning if you have a home insured for $500,000, there would be an extra $100,000 (20%) available if the loss exceeded the stated coverage. You never want to rely on this, but it is good to know it is available. To clarify, many people use that 20% as a basis for coverage, so they might only insure the home to $420,000 knowing there is the 20% available, effectively eliminating the cushion. We recommend reviewing the replacement coverage annually to be sure it is keeping up with your specific area, outside the small index increase each year that is built into the policy. It is the responsibility of the customer, not the insurance agent or carrier, to track these values. (Note: Home replacement in most areas now exceeds $300 a square foot. Cost of lumber and metal is dramatically on the rise and $400 a square foot is possible.)

Personal Property: Most policies offer replacement cost coverage as their default position in this category. This covers the true value of items that a customer would choose to replace. For example, if you lost a leather couch in a fire that you purchased in 2002, you could go to a local retailer and buy a new leather couch at today's cost and it would be covered under your insurance. If you choose NOT to replace those items, you will receive the actual cash value (ACV) of those items, which would be equivalent to the depreciated or "used value". In the couch scenario, what would a 20-year-old couch be worth? This is what you would get in the ACV scenario if that coverage was selected or if the item was not "replaced". I am simplifying this by example. (Note: Know your policy provider requirements on replacing personal property.)

Relating to record keeping: Keep records in the Cloud or on a thumb drive or hardcopy stored off premises. This is only for the client's benefit to easily recall items in the home, shop, garage, etc. It can be a challenge to remember every detail. We recommend opening cabinets, etc., and documenting items within just to help with recall. Likely the insurance carrier will never ask to see the footage or listings. There are cases where certain unique items would benefit from this documentation (artwork, antique furniture, collectibles).

Also, keep in mind there are certain limitations by category which may have theft limitations with most carriers (guns, jewelry, art). Nonetheless, cash, coins, and collectibles often have very modest limits, even relating to a fire loss. (Note: Be aware of your provider's requirements relating to personal property claims).

Vehicles: On another note, all vehicles, boats, ATVs, motorcycles, classic cars, snow mobiles, etc., must carry their own coverage to be considered for a fire claim. This would be under the comprehensive coverage or physical damage coverage of the specific vehicle policy and would be filed as a separate claim under that policy, subject to the selected deductible. Most home insurance carriers only allow for vehicles that are used for maintaining the property (small yard tractors, mowers, snow blowers, and ATVs set up for maintenance) to be included in the homeowner's policy.

Business: Also, keep in mind that any business-owned items (or if someone was running a business out of their home), would not be covered as coverage would fall under the business General Liability policy. For a business operating in an on-premises outbuilding or detached shop, this can be problematic as items in the shop that are business-owned or the actual "shop" itself will not be covered with many carriers. The building and its contents would

also need to be covered under a business policy even if it is located on the same premises.

We videotaped our possessions in every room and outbuilding. This is important and will help you with a claim. Our policy stated that we could either itemize our possessions or take 75% of the contents coverage. Unfortunately, I stored the video on a thumb drive in the safe, and yes, it was destroyed along with everything in the safe. Good plan but not executed well. Recommend you store pictures and spreadsheets on the Cloud. We found out the hard way that even high-end safes with a good thermal rating will not hold up to a sustained house fire resulting from a wildfire.

Review your policy annually. We opted for replacement value on all our coverages. I had a boat insured by USAA's "partner" Progressive as USAA doesn't insure boats and trailers. When we turned in our claim, Progressive said that after four years, replacement value ceases and that "our agent should have explained that." No agent did, nor was there any notice, nor reduction in premium. They said we could have renegotiated our contract at that time. That must have been on page 63 in the small print. School of hard knocks, eh.

Consider "Riders" on your high-value items. We carried riders on guns, computers, printers and jewelry. The cost is minimal, and the value of these items is paid separately.

As the house appreciated, we adjusted our insurance coverage accordingly. This eliminates haggling over the value of your home and also increases content coverage. House values today are appreciating at a very fast pace. You can get a new appraisal just for insurance purposes only. This will help you to determine necessary coverages. Our USAA policy asked if we wanted coverage on our outbuildings, and we selected to have coverage and the cost was minimal.

Bottom line, you can obtain better coverages at surprisingly reasonable rates. Review your policy and check to see the cost of additional coverages (riders, outbuildings, decks). Unbeknown to us, our policy also included trees and shrubbery. We had all these items covered. In our case, it was an extremely wise investment netting us an equitable payout and a financially stable platform for our "new" life.

We had plans to rebuild until several contractors said it would be three years before we could count on getting into the house on the river property and that the cost would be $300 a square foot. With the price of lumber skyrocketing, $400 may have been a more realistic figure.

Take the time to sit down with your agent and thoroughly review your coverages. Then inquire on costs for additional coverages. This is well worth your time should YOU draw the short straw. You will be happy you spent the time and money to receive the coverages you want. Once the fire starts, it's too late.

A New Day for the Forest Service

by Douglas P. Stinson (Cave Junction '54)

Introduction

Our national forests are in trouble. Climate change, population increase, and mismanagement have contributed to unhealthy, fire-susceptible forests. Many forests are overstocked, leading to tree mortality. When trees die or burn, carbon absorption, a main bulwark against global warming, stops. This year, I have read and reread two excellent books addressing forest fires and the general health of our national forests: *First Put Out the Fire* by Jim Peterson and *193 Million Acres: Toward a Healthier and more Resilient US Forest Service* edited by Steve Wilent. As I have pondered the ideas in these books, I have come up with a plan for sustainably managing the national forests on the "wet West side" of Oregon and Washington. My plan would create healthier forests, forests less susceptible to catastrophic fire. The topic is fraught with emotion and mistrust between various stakeholders. At times, I wondered if I really had anything that could move the discussion forward. Then I remembered I was "Allen-trained" at Cave Junction, and no way could I walk away without giving it my best shot.

My Background

National forests have been at the center of my professional life. I began my career in1959 as a junior forester on the South Tongass N.F. in Alaska. Ketchikan Pulp Company had a fifty-year contract with the USFS. The contract included most of Prince of Wales Island, and I was the sale administrator. After five years with the USFS, I went to work for U.S. Plywood cruising timber sales on the Umpqua N.F. I purchased 40-50 million board feet of timber per year to sustain a large plywood plant and sawmill in Roseburg, Oregon. In 1970 I was transferred to Morton, Washington, and purchased sales on the Gifford Pinchot N.F. for a sawmill and veneer plant. In 1978 I joined Conifer Pacific, a small plywood and veneer company. There I continued to buy USFS sales on the Olympic and Willamette National Forests. My experience as a steward of national forests and as a purchaser of timber from the forests gives me a unique view into the current situation.

Current situation

Many people are opposed to any harvesting on national forests. They often point to the overcutting that occurred in the 1970s and 80s. That overcutting led to a shutdown of logging on forest service land, a shutdown that for the most part is still in place today. One main reason for the excessive harvesting was that the allowable cut quotas were set in Washington, DC, or by the regional forest office, not by local foresters. Central to my plan is the idea that the people who know their forests should be the ones making the decisions. It's been thirty years since the court order that shut down the national forests. Our forests are unhealthy and burning down. It is time for a reasonable compromise.

Overall Management Plan

My plan pertains to forests west of the Cascades from the Canadian border to Cottage Grove, Oregon. Other knowledgeable foresters and land managers can provide similar plans for other regions and forests. My expertise is limited to the westside. It is important that models be made by knowledgeable people in each region. Diverse collaborative groups should be part of each forest plan. The groups should contain stakeholders from both industry and government. I talked with Mike Warjone, president of Port Blakely Tree Farms, who has been thinking about how to incentivize companies to lengthen the rotation of their harvests, thus increasing carbon absorption. He is proposing a plan that asks companies with sawmills and a forest base to keep their trees on the ground longer. In exchange, those companies' sawmills can process wood from USFS lands. These sorts of ideas come when people collaborate.

Doug Stinson looks over a 125-year-old Douglas Fir on his Site Class III. (Courtesy Ann Stinson)

The Plan

Establish a realistic, honest and sustainable allowable annual cut. A sustainable cut means you do not cut more than you grow.

Cut only 70% of the allowable cut. Reserve a 30% contingency in case of fire or windstorm damage. Never overcut. Review and rebalance the annual cut every ten years.

Harvest trees only on forests growing in Douglas Fir Site Class I, II, and III. Forests growing in Site Class IV and V have greater value for watershed, wildlife and recreation.*

Leave all existing old growth trees (any trees over 200 years of age).

Promptly suppress fires in forest areas included in this management plan.

Maintain an 80-year rotation of second/third growth:

1. establish stand, planting mixed species native to the site
2. 10-15 years precommercial thin
3. 25-30 years first commercial thin
4. 50 years second commercial thin
5. 80 years final harvest

Do not cut trees on side slopes greater than 60%.

Do not build mid-slope roads or roads on side slopes greater than 40%.

Maintain fish passage on all streams.

Maintain buffers on streams.

Do not do any damage to the soil.

Promptly remove blowdown or trees in insect-infested areas.

Establish a trail system to accommodate both horses and hikers

Maintain CCC trails into the high country.

**Site class refers to the quality of soil. The Washington Department of Resources divides soils into five classifications. Site 1 is the most productive, and a Douglas Fir tree in these soils will grow to a height of 137 feet in 50 years. Site V is the least productive, and a Douglas Fir will only grow to 75 feet in the same amount of time.*

Conclusion

This model would decrease fire, return our forests to a vigorous, vibrant state, and provide much-needed funds to our rural areas. People are a vital part of our forests. We must manage our forests with the earth's people in mind. We cannot just let the forest burn and deprive society of all the values that come from the forest. Good fire is an essential part of forest management. Prescribed burns are good fires. Large, out of control fires are bad fires and need to be avoided where possible.

In 2020 the Beachie Creek Fire, started by a lightning strike in the Opal Creek Wilderness Area was allowed to burn even as local mayors asked the Forest Service to put it out. When an east wind hit, the fire spread so fast, nothing could be done. 197,000 acres, including thousands of acres of private forest land, burned. The correction to the current impasse needs to start in Washington, D.C. Our elected leaders in Congress need to come together and move forward to manage our forests. Something I did not learn in forestry school, but have come to appreciate, is "love of the land." Most USFS people possess this love. We just need to let them do their job.

Doug and his wife, Fae Marie, have lived on and managed the Cowlitz Ridge Tree Farm for over 30 years. Doug's article "Birth of a Tree Farmer" (Jan. 2021 "Smokejumper") gives more detail about their time as "Tree Farmers." (Ed.)

Complexities of Afghanistan

author wishes to remain anonymous

After ten years deployed as a military contractor in Afghanistan, I have had the opportunity to witness the unique complexities of this place up close and personally.

Afghanistan, for a long time, has been strategically important as the meeting point of European, Asian, and Indian civilizations. The land has been settled for over 9,000 years and has been seized over and over by many conquerors from Genghis Khan, to the Greeks, British and Soviets, right up to the modern story of today. Afghans, as a combined people, have a very proud, brave history of their own. Due to their country's physical location between the Middle East and Asia, their mountains, steppe, and deserts have been fought over time and again. Sometimes for generation after generation.

The country's landscape consists of rugged mountains and the rolling steppe grasslands in the north and hot deserts of the south. It is a frontier location where the Middle East, Far East, and former countries of the USSR all meet.

Afghanistan has always been a strategic land of extremes and rich resources. The tribal people who have long called it home have been molded by these experiences and environments into being a resilient, highly independent, and individually competitive society. Their politics are often defined by personal competition mixed in with their own tribal and bloodline affiliations.

As a young smokejumper, I used to enjoy sitting around the campfires and listen to the tales spun of smokejumpers, Air America, and the Vietnam War era. Later in my career, but while still a smokejumper, I had the opportunity to work in Antarctica as a helicopter crewman. I enjoyed the adventure of the ice, but soon afterwards, I was offered my first role as the USAID air operations manager for Afghanistan. I said yes, even though it meant I had to give up my hard-won USFS appointment to go on this adventure.

I arrived in Kabul in early 2007, back when the city was still awash in well-meaning NGOs living their grand lifestyles off the back of the post-US invasion reconstruction and having security contractors protecting them. From my first days out, I found this a truly intriguing place.

I quickly learned Afghanistan has long been a frontier meeting ground for various peoples, strong desert tribes, history, weather extremes, and international political intrigues. While managing my armed Huey program at a point in time when this country was slowly slipping back into insurgent warfare, I fell in love with this desert time capsule where the past and the present coexist

The USAID contract led me to join the professional military company of DynCorp. On the next program, I worked directly for a former military general officer managing a Russian helicopter program for the Dutch Military. This program supported the international military coalition that took over Afghanistan's nation-rebuilding efforts as the NGOs exited with the deteriorating security situation.

I enjoyed working with the Russian crews and the giant Mi-26s as we conducted military missions. The Russians were brave, both team and mission oriented. They were familiar with the landscape, having previously participated in action during the Soviet era.

Afghanistan is a vast area where political achievements are hard to quantify. After a while, countries began pulling out of the coalition and the US Military surged in. Due to its rugged terrain and high-risk land movements, air lift is a critical part of any effort in Afghanistan, as all newcomers soon discovered.

With the surging US efforts, I switched contracts inside of DynCorp to become a helicopter crewman on their fleet of ex-Soviet Mi-8s/Mi-17s. We provided a daily air link service to the many US outposts that begun springing up across the southern theater in a very active war zone.

My job as a crewman included the task of combat search and rescue duties if the aircraft that I was assigned to would go down outside the

protected safety landing zones. I enjoyed this role as much as I did flying around with my Russians on the previous contract. Every day we flew across this spectacular place, being given an eagle's perspective of the various goings on of the drug industry, the fighting, and the locals just going about their lives.

My USFS background was discovered by my new management, and when DynCorp started up its Huey "Special Operations Airwing," I became its lead helicopter crewman and trainer. I was able to keep flying around the mountains and deserts of Afghanistan in Hueys when not out in the Mi-8/Mi-17s.

Around 2012 the war began to change with a slowing down of the US military surge. This was a peak time in the Afghan War where, due largely to US efforts, much of this country was provided with security. The locals could finally have a breather from experiencing constant warfare and insecurity since the late 1970s. I felt proud of our accomplishments towards achieving this tremendous goal. So, in 2012, I stepped away from the war to return to fire in both the US and Australia.

After leaving, I didn't keep up with the turns of this distant war, but in 2016 when I received a request to return for an aviation role, I again said yes. However, it took until 2018 for my processing to be completed so that I could return in-country again.

I quickly saw there had been a readjustment. When I left six years before, our enemy was largely beaten, and the people had finally been able to start to rebuild their lives again. This time I arrived to a very different situation. The military situation in Afghanistan had completely changed, and not in a good way. Where the war had been largely won against Islamic extremists, after I had left in 2012, politics had given away our battlefield successes to create an impression of a won war.

Afghanistan is a very complex, competitive country with a very proud and resourceful mix of highly independent tribal peoples. A fair, non-corrupt, strong and inclusive government, that truly cares about and supports all of its peoples equally, would be successful and would be able to provide stability. However, short cuts were taken to sway the American public opinion, and US troops were pulled back to mostly secure compounds. By giving away most of the battlefield gains and moving into protected garrison fortresses, we were condemning the future of Afghanistan. Soon afterwards, huge expanses of territory fell back into extremist hands, and the Americans in our forts outside of Special Operations often had their hands tied helping the Afghans in their fight.

The Taliban rebuilt its army, in the vacuum of the American pullback, to a force greater than 40,000 troops fighting the government forces. Government controlled territory was quickly falling into enemy hands. Due to widespread corruption and lack of governance in many areas, the Afghan public opinion as well began swinging away from the government and back towards the Taliban.

The battlefield options were limited. Troops could be surged to re-stabilize the war situation; however, would the US public tolerate the price in US soldier deaths this would cost? Therefore, an exit strategy was selected. It was believed that the Taliban could be negotiated with and an imperfect internal Afghanistan power sharing arrangement made.

But a new complexity was added into this vacuum of US Army pullbacks as ISIS-K had invaded

Afghanistan and established its ugly foothold. ISIS-K is an enemy of the Taliban, due to their much more violent and extremist ideals and practices. Even the Taliban understood that they could find themselves being beaten and dispossessed by ISIS-K due to that group's tactics of sheer bloody violence.

I rejoined the fight in Afghanistan in this phase of the war, when we began the killing of ISIS-K as we started negotiating with the Taliban. The new Afghan buzz words in 2018 were "mentoring" for the Afghan military leadership and making friends with the Taliban moving towards an American withdrawal. I joined in supporting the US Army troops within range of the Pakistani border by working with military and civilian helicopters to sling loads, helping in varying military operations against ISIS-K, and applying pressure on the Taliban.

Our main focus was helping eliminate ISIS-K and mentoring the Afghan military to eliminate the threat of hundreds of ISIS-K fighters who poured into Afghanistan from other conflicts across the Middle East, India and Africa. As those types of missions began to wind down towards the end of 2018, I left to take time off.

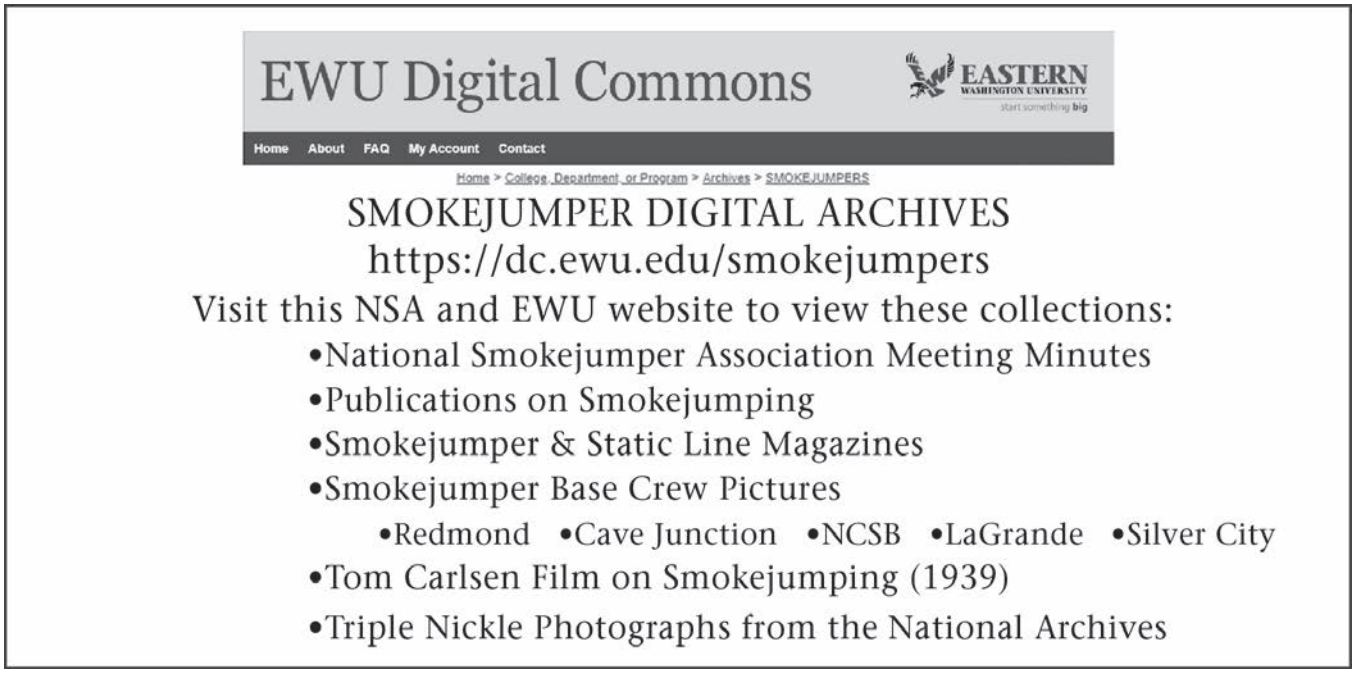
In 2019 I returned on a new contract working for the US State Department assisting in the management of their air assets moving people around, keeping them safe, and providing 24/7 medevac support. Before when I was closely involved in the fight, now I entered the forefront of the swirl supporting the international politics of this war as it appeared to be winding its way downward.

It's been a great adventure over these many years in Afghanistan. I've made an income in exchange for giving up my smokejumper appointment. My experiences have given me a few more good stories to tell around the campfires someday.

There is serious talk now about a full military pullout and that would quickly lead to a bloody internal Afghan Civil War. Hopefully, this does not happen. The regular Afghan people and all our efforts, until now, deserve a much better ending to all of this. On the surface, a simple full international military pullout may appear most attractive, but there are other inclusive options to create much better outcomes for everyone, and hopefully they will be the options chosen.

While Afghanistan is not the United States, it is at least as complex as America, where solutions are layered and interwoven if they are to be successful.

What Afghanistan can proudly show the world is that it is possible to carry on living and be resilient in the face of generation after generation of war. People still are able to fall in love, get married, have babies, and keep working in the face of great adversity. For this reason, Afghanistan is not a place I would ever simplify or underestimate.



Notes from the Ranks

Pat McGunagle
(West Yellowstone '19)

How To Speak With Authority

We're in a rarefied company of smokejumpers, forestry technicians, anyone paid to work outside doing work they love, and anyone who's looked up at a tree and decided to save it rather than let it burn. There's a pine tree on the Black Eagle Fire in Arizona that'll live for the several hours I spent reaching up inside the cat face, picking out smoldering fire. That tree will maybe outlive me, so I apologize for the vain use of government time. I still think about it. Maybe a contract crew cut it down as a hazard.

Fire is different now. Take all the emotional charge out of the climate change debate and you still get the hard science that shrubland is progressing north, flashier invasive species promote increased fire return, and the number of hot days by any measure are increasing each year. The planes are different. The parachutes are different. The job is different. Don't get caught saying "I think I'm going to stop jumping and go get a real job." For many of us, jumping IS a real job. If I stick with my shiny new job with the BLM, I can retire as a smokejumper in twenty years.

Money is different now. The dawn of a more industrial approach to fire occurred at the twilight of the 10 a.m. Rule. Billions are the new millions of dollars and trees don't seem to matter. I bet I know maybe three smokejumpers that can actually calculate board feet in a tree. This pandemic—it's the age of alternative facts and perfect hindsight. But behind all the great "who done it" games, the endless postmortems and what-could've-beens of fires that went nova last year (but really should've just burned forty years ago), there's something more that still connects us all. What?

Every fire in my minimal experience is already tinged in sepia-hued nostalgia, laughter, and chainsaw crescendos still echoing in the mountains. Pending further life adventure, I'll still be writing about those fires in ever more robust verbiage, more doting memory, and damn those new guys if they think they ever had it as good. It's time, in spite of itself. The memories are great, but we're older every time we think about them.

I think that without more dialogue from the ranks of current jumpers, the NSA will quickly become less of an association and more of, say, a foundation, a self-accolading vehicle of the successes of older jumpers, other times. The NSA will lose the perspective that the current cohort of boots on the ground can bring. I want to restore some balance here, and maybe it starts with dialogue. My next few articles may have an element of devil's advocacy, because if any firefighter is critical to a fault, it's smokejumpers, critical of themselves. It's the best way to speak with authority.

"I dunno, bro, that magazine is all just Vietnam stories." I'm on third load today and no one else on third load reads *Smokejumper*. I conspire to understand why. These guys are Marines, Rangers, combat controllers, just as much as that older demographic ever was. But those Vietnam boys passed the torch to other wars with other tactics. Maybe the new stories are ones we don't quite know how to tell yet. I've been looking for some jumper to speak of Helmand and Kandahar, forays into Pakistan on Russian helicopters, "aid" missions in countries we've never officially been in. But I sense the time isn't yet ripe for those

stories. It's as if the plane's up, but they haven't found the smoke. Maybe smokejumping helps these stories come out easier, later.

It's been a surprising privilege to learn the lore of smokejumper history from the NSA archives and Board. I had no idea the NSA existed until deep into my rookie year. There's a wealth of information here, incredible spirit and, evidently, longevity that comes with a vivacious outlook for life and the wildlands. I can't wait to partake in TRAMPS projects my first summer out of this fire gig. But in smokejumping, as with Vietnam, I think we have to realize: The torch has been passed!

Later, more to the Vietnam story: "Look, those guys had to go. I didn't have many other places to go, other than Iraq. Blackwater after that. Nobody asked me. I don't even know what we did, so how can I tell a story about it?" We're on a practice jump and they're already throwing streamers. I nod him off. "Cool, man. Hey, question... we pull the green handle, right?" I wink at his confusion and start to tighten up for the jump. Respecting our training doesn't mean we can't have fun.

Later, at a brewery, with good company, it's the end of fire season. I'm contemplating the disconnect between the CCC of old and my prospect of unemployed winter months, a ship without a rudder, perilous seas ahead for a young male mind. Questions on vim and vigor and "What It All Means." Does this smokejumper thing hold all the answers, or is it a coping mechanism, delaying bigger and better ideas? Other seasonal workers find a similar conundrum. "I wouldn't get too hung up on it; you're a sky god, after all." She's pretty, all smiles, very smart, and after another beer tells me she's a rappeller. Ah, damn. Mixed kin; aerially delivered. Jet A really the only common denominator, besides the beer. The way her voice says "sky god" ignites a dangerous ego boost that could capsize too buoyant a personality. Oh, rappellers. Fixed wing flight at least has the decency to respect fluid dynamics and Archimedean principles.

The rappeller gives me *Sometimes a Great Notion* by Ken Kesey. More vigor, more vim. Maybe thanks to this book, I survived the offseason, left a fancy district job, and now enjoy the prospect of jump refresher, a new jump base, new jump bros, a new cool letdown procedure and that feeling that this summer is going to be one busy, big fast forward to October. You'll hear all about it!

It might've taken a pandemic for us to understand our place within nature again. Some big fires in Oregon and California last summer, yeah, but endless post mortems won't get us anywhere with any credibility. Agency administrators and other mid-level managers, several levels removed from smoke, fireline hazards, and smelly smokejumpers, will never get the true picture of our worth. We have another big season ahead of us. Smokejumpers are still a critical fire resource. We will get ordered, we will put out fires, and we will also not be ordered to some fires that become monsters. No one will hear about the bulk of our quiet success, and for us, that's long been the personal charm to the job. Maybe to speak with authority on our merits, we need to figure out how to better understand our actual success rate. What is the value add? It's not infinite but in the age of mega fires and nearly infinite insurance claims, it could be, well, nearly infinite.

That smoke out of the reach of rappellers in the mountains? That's the domain of the fabled sky gods, the eminent domain of the smokejumpers.

Please feel free to contact me at *patmcgunz@gmail.com*.

There's a wealth of information here, incredible spirit and, evidently, longevity that comes with a vivacious outlook for life and the wildlands. I can't wait to partake in TRAMPS projects my first summer out of this fire gig. But in smokejumping, as with Vietnam, I think we have to realize: The torch has been passed!

RECORDING SMOKEJUMPER HISTORY

1942 Rookies—The Pioneers
NSA History Preservation Project

Richard Norton Moffett (Missoula '42)

Richard Norton Moffett, Sr. was born February 17, 1907, in East Kamiah, Idaho, on the Nez Perce Reservation, the son of a noted Nez Perce Indian Presbyterian minister. Richard was seven-eighths Native American and a member of the Nez Perce Tribe. He attended the Fort Lapwai Indian School on the Nez Perce Reservation. By 1930, he was working for the Forest Service as a laborer and in 1932, he married and had ten children.

On May 20, 1942, Richard reported to the old CCC station at Nine Mile where he began smokejumper training and making training jumps at the nearby Six Mile Airfield. Fellow trainees were Arild C. Nielsen, Roy Mattson, Karl Nussbacher, Earl Cooley, John J. Beck, and Richard McClung from Missoula, John Nash from Hamilton, and James Cochran from Kooskia, Idaho. The following month, he was assigned to the Moose Creek RD, Bitterroot NF.

In April 1944 he enlisted in the U.S. Navy and, after a short enlistment, was released in November 1945 based on family dependency. Richard died in Kamiah on October 12, 1982, at the age of 75. He is buried at the Nikesa Cemetery in Kamiah, Idaho.

John Edgar "Jack" Nash (Missoula '42)

Jack died December 20, 1990, at age 87 of natural causes in Missoula. He was born in Utica, Montana, on December 10, 1903. He was one of the pioneer smokejumpers in 1942 and had five fire jumps that summer. Jack enlisted in the US Navy January 19, 1943, and served as a parachute rigger. Following his discharge from the Navy on October 27, 1945, he returned to the Missoula smokejumpers in 1946 as master parachute rigger, training countless others as riggers, until his retirement in 1969. For his lifetime of service, Jack received the USDA Superior Service Award in 1967, the Montana Jefferson Award in 1986, the Senior Citizen of Montana Award and the Boy Scout Silver Beaver Award. He is buried at Sunset Memorial Gardens in Missoula.

Paul A. Nicholas (MSO '42)

Paul, 98, died October 5, 2019. He was the oldest living smokejumper at that time. Paul, who was born in Kansas, started his collegiate studies at Fort Hays in Kansas and transferred to Montana State University in Missoula, where he earned a basketball scholarship and studied Forestry.

He entered the Air Force in 1942 and was commissioned as a pilot and became certified to fly the PT-17 Steadman, BT-13A Vultee, AT-6, and the B-25 aircraft. Paul was a veteran of WWII and Korea and flew with the Air Rescue Service. During his time in the Air Force, he specialized in logistics and, among other areas, worked on the F-16 fighter jet program in equipment guidance. Nicholas also helped in the development of aircraft simulators. He retired as a Major in 1964 after 20 years of service during which time he completed a bachelor's degree under Project Bootstrap.

Paul continued his work in the aviation field at several USAF bases and retired from Civil Service in 1983. From his son Michael—"He loved being a smokejumper. It was a special time in his life, and I believe it formed his future career in the Air Force."

Arild Christian Nielsen (Missoula '42)

Arild was born May 1, 1922, in Williston, North Dakota. He attended school in Williston until about 1937 when the family moved to Missoula, Montana. He graduated from Missoula County High School where he was on the high school boxing team in the 145-pound weight division. After high school Arild attended the

University of Montana for two years working summers as a Forest Service lookout and in 1942 as a Missoula smokejumper, making at least three fire jumps.

After smokejumping, he enlisted in the U.S. Army as a paratrooper and in March 1944, he graduated from the Army Air Forces advanced flying school as a second lieutenant. He married in August 1944 and continued serving in the military while he and his wife had three children. He flew in the Pacific theater of operations in WWII and in the Korean Conflict.

Contact with Arild was lost on May 26, 1951, when the F-82 he was flying disappeared in North Korea while flying a weather reconnaissance mission 20 miles north of the 38th parallel. In July 1951, he was officially listed as Missing in Action. In July 1954 he was reported as "presumed dead" when a returned prisoner of war from communist North Korea reported that "Captain Nielsen died while a prisoner of the Reds." Arild's remains were never recovered.

His name is inscribed on the Courts of the Missing at the Honolulu, Hawaii Memorial, at the Korean War Veterans Memorial in Washington, D.C., and at the Montana Korean War Memorial in Missoula. Arild was awarded the Air Medal with Oak Leaf Cluster, the Purple Heart, the Korean Service Medal, the United Nations Service Medal, the National Defense Service Medal, and the Korean War Service Medal.

Eugene Lee Pitts (Missoula '42)

Gene, 90, died Feb. 18, 2011, in Ronan, Montana. He was born April 9, 1920, in Spokane, Washington, and was a registered member of the Salish Tribe at Flathead Reservation. After an outstanding track and field career at Hot Springs High School, he attended the University of Wisconsin on a track scholarship after sending newspaper clippings from his races to Wisconsin.

Gene joined the U.S. Navy Flight Program in 1942, training at Missoula County Airport while attending the University of Montana. He shipped out for World War II combat in the South Pacific, flying a Gull Wing F-4U Corsair. Gene became a squadron leader in Guadalcanal and was shot down during his second year of combat fighting.

Following the war Gene operated the Pitts Lumber Sawmill in Camas Prairie, Montana, until moving and expanding the operation in Ravalli in 1951. After the mill burned in the early 1960s, he developed a registered Polled Hereford cattle ranch in Dixon, Montana. He became the director of the CSKT Community Action Program several years later, and finally as postmaster in Dixon before retiring in 1990. Gene returned to ranching and joined the Mission Valley Power Board, retiring for good at age 85.

He jumped at Missoula in 1942, training at Nine Mile Base, one of the first jumpers to do so. As a freshman at the University of Wisconsin, Gene was the school's top runner in the 880 and won the famous Turkey Cross Country race, breaking the record by 23 seconds. He also served as the pace runner for teammate Walter Mehl in his 1941 bid to break the world record in the mile. He is buried at Sunset Memorial Gardens in Missoula.

Thomas Joseph Poole (Missoula '42)

Tom, at age 75, died of natural causes in Missoula, Montana, on April 27, 1999. He was born in Helena, Montana, on December 25, 1923, and later the family moved to Missoula where Tom grew up and was educated.

He graduated from high school at Gonzaga in Spokane. At age 18 he trained with the smokejumpers in 1942, making two fire jumps that summer. He also enlisted for the draft that summer and joined the US Navy.

Following his discharge in 1947, Tom did an apprenticeship in carpentry and then began his own contracting business in Missoula. Over the years and until his retirement, he built or remodeled many Missoula homes. He was actively involved in his church and is buried at St. Mary's Cemetery in Missoula.

Harold Russell "Dick" Richards Jr. (Missoula '42)

Dick, 82, passed away April 8, 2003. He graduated from Libby High and attended Antioch College, Ohio, and the University of Montana.

Dick jumped the 1942 season before entering the Army Air Corps where he was a B-25 co-pilot stationed in the Philippines and was eyewitness to the dropping of the A-bomb over Hiroshima. He

settled in Portland, Oregon, after the war and was employed by United Airlines.

Dick worked for the FAA for many years retiring from that organization and living in Oceanside, California, until his death.

Donald Everette Rodgers (Missoula '42)

Don, age 86, died March 29, 2009, at Yorba Linda, California. He was born September 2, 1922, in Greybull, Wyoming, and graduated high school there before enrolling at Montana State University in Missoula where he was a forestry major.

Don enlisted in the US Navy as LtJG on October 10, 1942, and served in the Pacific theater until his discharge on February 20, 1946. Don resumed his studies at MSU and graduated in 1948. He worked as a land surveyor and is buried at Riverside National Cemetery in Riverside, California.

Benjamin Alexander Skillman (MSO-42)

Ben was born in Livingston, Montana, on March 24, 1913. His education ended after grammar school and by 1940, he was working for the Northern Pacific Railroad. He was a smokejumper in 1942 and enlisted in the Army September 21,1942, two weeks after making his last fire jump.

Ben lived in various cities in Montana his entire life except for his short hitch in the Army, working primarily for lumber companies as a foreman. He died in Broadwater, Montana, on January 26, 1991.

Henry Michael "Mickey" Smith Jr. (Missoula '42)

Mickey was born August 20, 1921, in Missoula, Montana. He was an avid baseball player and skier. He played third base for Missoula's first American Legion junior championship team in 1938.

After graduating from high school in Missoula, he worked for the U.S. Immigration and Naturalization Service at Fort Missoula and attended the University of Montana, enrolling in the Civilian Pilot Training program.

Mickey was a smokejumper in Missoula the summer of 1942 and in February 1943, enlisted in the U.S. Navy. In 1944 he earned his wings from the Naval Air Training Center in Corpus Christi, Texas. In 1945, he was stationed at Patuxent River, Maryland, and the following year with the Army Air Force in China.

After military service, Mickey moved to California, living there until his death in San Jose, CA, on September 24, 2000.

Marshall Eugene Spencer (Missoula '42)

Marshall died May 29, 2010, in Hamilton, Montana, from bladder cancer. He was born March 6, 1921, in Twin Falls, Idaho. He lived near Filer, Idaho, and graduated from Filer High School in 1939. Marshall jumped at Missoula during the 1942 season, making nine training and three fire jumps while being stationed at Seeley Lake.

He graduated from the University of Idaho Forestry School in 1943 and went to Officer Candidate School at Fort Benning, Georgia. Marshall landed at Omaha Beach as a replacement officer shortly after D-Day and was in combat in France, Belgium and the Netherlands. He was seriously wounded in October of 1944 and spent 19 months of hospitalization and was awarded the Bronze Star and Purple Heart.

After the war he worked for the USFS in Region 1 for 18 years and transferred to Madison, Wisconsin, and Washington, D.C. His last assignment was in Berkeley, California, as assistant director at the Pacific Forest and Range Experiment Station. He retired in 1977 after 35 years of service and moved back to Montana in 1978.

He was active throughout his life and belonged to many organizations. In 1991 he was chosen Man of the Year for Region 6 and received the award at a special ceremony where he was presented with a plaque by the governor. His further education consisted of a two-year course in real estate at the Diablo Valley College, Labor Management School at the San Francisco State University, and previous programs sponsored by the U.S Forest Service. In 1999, he was invited to Kerkrade, Netherlands in remembrance of his help in liberating Limberg.

Donald Oliver Whitmarsh (Missoula '42)

Don, 88, died in Edmonds, Washington, on December 2, 2009. He was born January 3, 1921. Don was attending Montana State University

in Missoula when he signed on as a jumper for the 1942 season. He was called to active duty on October 10, 1942, and served in the US Army stationed in the Aleutians until his discharge on December 5, 1945. After his discharge at the end of the war, he returned to smokejumping for the 1946-48 season.

Don was injured while working as a faller in Montana and moved to Washington where he worked on his parent's farm and various family businesses. He is buried at Evergreen Memorial Cemetery in Renton, Washington.

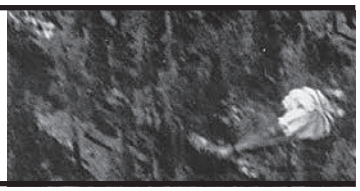
Thorsrud, Edgar L. (MSO-42)

NSA Life Member, Ed died March 27, 2007, at Finley Point, Montana. He was born in Watford City, North Dakota, on August 5, 1922. Ed moved to Missoula in 1927 with his family and attended Missoula County High School where he competed in Alpine and Nordic skiing.

After his rookie year, in which he had at least one fire jump, he joined the Army Air Corps and flew troops and cargo from England to the continent.

Following the war, Ed flew for the Johnson Flying Service delivering cargo, smokejumpers, and firefighters to fires throughout the west. In the mid '50s, he invested in his own retardant aircraft and worked for many years in that business. Eventually, Ed moved to Finley Point, settling into one of the many homes he and his son, Lloyd, built in their years working together.

THE JUMP LIST
MEN OF THE '50s



This column is part of the NSA History Preservation Program. All information will be kept in the Smokejumper Archives at Eastern Washington University. (Ed.)

ROBERT ZELWIN ALIBER
(Missoula '51)

Bob jumped the 1951 season at Missoula. He graduated from Williams College in Massachuchtes with his bachelor's degree in 1952 and attended Cambridge University, Cambridge, England 1952-1954 on a Fulbright Scholarship where he earned his master's degree. Bob then served in the Army 1954-56 before earning his Ph.D. from Yale in 1962. His bio is so extensive that it can be found in Wikipedia and includes: Staff Economist, Commission on Money and Credit, New York, 1959-61; Staff Economist, Committee for Economic Development, Washington,1961-64; Senior Economic Advisor, Office of Program Coordination, Agency for International Development, U.S. Department of State, 1964-65; Graduate School of Business, University of Chicago, 1965-2004, and much more.

Bob was a professor of International Economics and Finance at the University of Chicago. He is best known for his contribution to the theory of foreign direct investment. He has given the concept of foreign exchange rate in foreign direct investment.

Bob is an NSA Life Member and has donated generously to the NSA Scholarship Program.

PHILLIP D. BAIAMONTE
(Missoula '50)

Phil was born October 1, 1931, in Monticello, New Mexico. His father was a teacher in a one-room school at the time. He graduated from Albuquerque H.S. in 1949, the University of New Mexico in 1953, and the University of Colorado Law School in 1956. While at the University of New Mexico, Phil jumped two seasons getting two fire jumps in 1950 and seven during the 1951 season.

Phil entered the U.S. Army as a Lieutenant and served in the 3rd Armored Division in Germany until his discharge in 1959. He was admitted to practice law in Colorado and New Mexico and was appointed State District Judge for the

State of New Mexico, where he served 1974-84. Phil was married for 57 years until the death of his wife, Pat, and they had four sons.

"I'm presently 88 years old and my hobby is to drive my Harley Davidson Road King all over North America and Canada."

ROY L. BELLI
(Cave Junction '51)

Roy jumped the 1951 season at the "Gobi" while attending Utah State University where he graduated in 1953 with a degree in Mathematics. Roy then went into the Marine Corps where he had a 30-year career retiring as a Colonel in 1983. He continued his education while in the Marine Corps at George Washington University 1963-65 (Personnel Management), U.S Naval War College 1973-74 (Distinguished Graduate), and at American University 1983-85 (Technology of Management).

After his retirement from the Marine Corps, Roy was Associate Professor of Computer Information Systems, Northern Virginia Community College 1985-96. Roy is a NSA Life Member and has contributed greatly to the NSA and the Siskiyou Smokejumper Museum. He lives in Lancaster, Pennsylvania.

JOHN W. "JACK" DEINEMA
(McCall '50)

Jack is a native of Iowa and got his BS degree in Forestry from Iowa State College. He started as a smokejumper in 1950 at McCall, where he made four fire jumps, and then as a Junior Forester on the Challis NF in 1952. He continued working in R-4, including being the Regional Director of Personnel and in 1967 was named Forest Supervisor of the Challis NF.

He was an influential FS Manager in the 1970s, including being the Director of the Job Corp Program in DC and Regional Forester in R-5. Jack is another example of the people who began as smokejumpers and went on to be influential leaders in the USFS. He is currently living in Tigard, Oregon.

WILLIAM H. "BILL" DEMMONS (MSO-51)

Bill grew up in Bonner, MT, "a sawmill town with the big Anaconda Copper mining companies—the sawmill (was) where most of us from the local town worked at one time or another." He went through the local school system in Bonner and graduated from Missoula County High School in 1950. Bill worked for the FS on Blister Rust Control projects during the summers of 1948-50.

Bill graduated from the University of Montana in 1954. He jumped at Missoula from 1951-54. Being in the ROTC program took Bill to Fort Benning, GA, in the fall of 1954 where he was a 2nd Lt. in the Infantry. He went into Army Aviation and trained in Texas and Alabama during 1955-56 before being sent to West Germany in 1956 as an Army Aviator assigned to a Field Artillery Battalion.

Bill resigned his Army commission in 1958 and transferred to the Air Force. He was with the USAF 1958-80 and served in the Far East, Southeast Asia, Africa, and had two tours in the Pentagon. In 1980 he was back in civilian life doing commercial aviation and farm real estate. In 2000 Bill retired and is currently living in Green Valley, AZ.

NEIL L. DIBBLE
(North Cascades '50)

Neil was born in March 1928 to Clyde and Selma Dibble in Washington. He lived with his family in Winthrop, Washington, through high school.

Neil attended Washington State College in Pullman, Washington, for a short period of time and enlisted in the U.S. Air Force in 1951. He later attended Oregon State College earning a BS degree and taught math in Omak, Washington, in 1954. He also taught science in Pateros, Washington, in 1956. He is currently living in Corvallis, Oregon.

EDWARD R. EVATZ
(Missoula '51)

Ed graduated high school in Price, Utah, in 1947 and graduated from Utah State University in Forestry in 1951. He and fellow graduate **Carl Deward** (MSO-51) headed north for smokejumper training at Nine Mile just west of Missoula. Following that season, he accepted an appointment on the Flathead NF

before being drafted into the Army during the Korean War.

Later he joined the BLM and initiated the first advertised timber sale on public lands in Colorado. After several years he became a Range Conservationist and transferred to the Grand Junction office.

Ed worked for the USFS and BLM for nearly 35 years, ending his government career as the Associate State Director for the Nevada BLM. In retirement he helped start the Nevada unit of an environmental consulting firm (JBR Consultants). Ed started, managed, and grew the Nevada business unit of JBR for 10 years before retiring in the mid-90s. He is currently living in Reno, Nevada.

HENRY G. "BUZZ" FLORIP
(Cave Junction '50)

Buzz was born and raised on a small farm near Rogers City, MI. He left high school early to join the Army in 1947. After basic training at Fort Knox (KY), he was transferred to Japan for airborne training with the 11th Airborne Division. He was discharged in 1950.

Buzz learned about the Siskiyou Smokejumpers from **Bud Proctor** (CJ-50) who was also in the 11th Airborne Division in Japan. They were in separate units but met when they were both transferred to the division band which was in "desperate need of musicians." Bud was discharged a month ahead of Buzz and headed to Cave Junction and the smokejumpers. He told **Cliff Marshall** (CJ-46) that Buzz would be arriving in Cave Junction in July. "Thanks to Bud and Cliff, I had a job waiting."

Buzz entered Oregon State in 1950 and went into radio broadcasting in 1955 at KRUL in Corvallis, OR, and started his career in radio. "I became manager at KBCH, Ocean Lake, OR, in 1960 and stayed in that position until 1973, when I was transferred to KNPT, in Newport. In 1975 we moved to Medford and joined KOBI-TV. I was hired as the director of Radio Operations, which I did until 1984."

Buzz retired in 1999 completing 44 years in the broadcasting industry. During his career he served on the Oregon Association of Broadcasters and was the State President in 1977.

As a volunteer, Buzz spent 30 years in search and rescue flying, teaching mountain flying to new pilots and managing search missions for lost aircraft, hunters, and hikers. Buzz is currently living in Medford, Oregon.

RALPH R. GREGERSON
(McCall '50)

Ralph, 92, was born October 30, 1927, in Pasadena, California. He moved to Boise, Idaho, shortly after he was born and grew up there graduating from high school in 1945. Ralph was drafted into the Army 1946-47 and attended Aviation Flight and Maintenance school after his discharge. He was a mechanic for West Coast Airlines for two years before going to Pan American World Airways where he spent the next 29 years as a flight engineer.

Ralph jumped out of McCall 1950 and 1952 getting three fire jumps during the '50 season and six during the '52 season. He is living in Santa Rosa, California. (Sept. 2020)

JACK HARTER
(Cave Junction '51)

Jack jumped at CJ 1951, '54-58 and was a squadleader for Base Manager **Jim Allen** (NCSB-46). He was a 2nd Lt., US Army, in Korea during the interim and was wounded in action July 5, 1953, in North Korea.

In 1962 Jack had a dream to start a helicopter business on the Hawaiian island of Kauai offering tours, charters and other services.

Fifty-eight years later, Jack Harter Helicopters, the original helicopter tour company on the island, is still in business. Despite the competition from as many as 12 other companies, Jack, 89, has kept his company on top.

In 2005 his business pioneered the first-ever doors-off tour of Kauai. "We want a way for photographers to capture the raw beauty of the island without the glare from windows."

Today Jack Harter Helicopters operate four MD 500s, one Airbus A-star, has six pilots and 32 employees. Jack lives in Lihue, Hawaii (Aug. 2020).

G. GEORGE OSTROM
(Missoula '50)

Glenn George Ostrom was born in Missoula, Montana, on July 24, 1928, and grew up in Sanders County during the heart of the Depression. He started a newspaper in the 6th grade and lied about his age to get a job fighting fires at the age of 15. George left Flathead County High School at the age of 17 to join the Army and served in the Signal Corps in Germany during the Occupation.

George trained with the Missoula smokejumpers in 1950, eventually rising to position of squadleader and trainer. He jumped five years before a broken leg ended his jumping career. His passion for hiking never subsided, and he's hiked 25,000 miles in and around Glacier National Park and has written three books about his beloved mountains.

George has been a fixture in the Flathead Valley since joining the announcing staff at KOFI-AM in 1956. Ostrom, a writer, broadcaster, and photographer, is known as the "Voice of the Flathead Valley." For the past fifty years he served as co-owner, general manager, and news director of KOFI radio. In 1974 he bought the *Kalispell Weekly News* and turned it into the largest circulation weekly newspaper in Montana. His "Trailwatcher" column in the *Hungry Horse News* has won state and national awards, and he has been inducted into the Montana Broadcasters Association Hall of Fame. George helped write the Wilderness Bill with Senator Lee Metcalf in 1962. He is a distinguished alumnus of the University of Montana.

George married Iris Ann Wilhelm in Kalispell on April 12, 1958. He never will really "retire." He can still be heard occasionally on KGEZ radio and recently completed work on a children's book which was released on his 90th birthday.

ROBERT G. SYMES
(Idaho City '50)

Bob Symes, nicknamed "Static" on his first static line jump in McCall in 1950, was born Robert G. Symes October 31, 1930, in Oakland, California. He lived in Orinda ,California, through high school. Bob attended college at Utah State University for two years before leaving school to work in the forest. He held several positions with a sawmill and worked as a logger before applying to the smokejumpers. Bob was drafted into the Army in February 1952 and served two years in the Signal Corps working for the Northern European Command Headquarters in Frankfurt Germany.

After his tour in the Army in 1954, he completed his degree in Forest Management at the University of Montana in 1957 and worked for the state for several years before being hired by the Anaconda Forest Products company in Missoula in 1960.

Bob was married to Alverta Craft of Missoula in 1960, and they have two children, Todd and Tanya. Bob continued as a Logging Engineer for Anaconda before it sold out to US Plywood in 1972. Bob retired in 1992 and currently lives in Milwaukee Oregon. Bob and his wife ran a public display garden near Bonner, Montana, for about 20 years before she passed in 2014. Since retiring he has done a lot of traveling, hiking, hunting, and fly fishing streams in the Pacific Northwest and Alaska. Bob's passion is fly fishing and gardening.

Bob said his firefighting career got started at the age of 16—when many WWII veterans were getting degrees in college after the war and they needed young men to fight fire. He worked with a fire crew for the State of California Department of Forestry near Redding, CA, in 1947, gaining the experience he would need to be hired by the smokejumpers. He worked one more year for the Forest Service before he started jump training in McCall. Bob was assigned to the Idaho City jump base in the summer of 1950. A wet winter meant there were not going to be a lot of fires further north, but it was a different story in southern Idaho where they were very busy jumping fire out of Idaho City. He jumped on six or seven fires in his one and only season with the smokejumpers before joining the Army. He picked up his nickname from a Squadleader who reminded him before he jumped on his very first parachute jump, on his very first airplane ride, that he probably ought to hook up his static line if he wanted his parachute to open! He did, and it did.

National Smokejumper Reunion
June 24–26, 2022

ODDS AND ENDS

by Chuck Sheley

Congratulations and thanks to **John Crues** (MSO-70), **Larry Boggs** (RDD-63), **Don Bestwick** (MSO-80), **Jim Wilson** (MSO-62), **Steve Wilkins** (RAC-65), **Claire Olson** (MSO-68), **Phil Perkins** (FBX-76), **Kirk Hale** (LGD-79) and **Bob Nicol** (MSO-52) who just became our latest Life Members.

Brad Willard (MSO-58): "It was good to see **Doug Bell** (MSO-58) standing by his highly used vehicle (pg. 35 April issue *Smokejumper*) along with **Tom Greiner** (MSO-55). Doug had 'modified' his vehicle with a platform made of 2x4s that I enjoyed using as an observation deck as we flew down the highway.

"I remember the Park Ranger at Glacier Park pulled us over and scolded me for riding on the platform. When he learned that we were 'crazy smokejumpers,' he shook his head and drove off. I continued to enjoy the view of the Park from Doug's elevated platform."

Dave Colbert (NCSB-88) feedback on Good Samaritan Fund help: "Our son had been diagnosed with oligodendroglioma, a type of brain cancer, earlier that fall (2017). Financial support from the NSA for our son helped defray the many expenses associated with multiple trips to Seattle for consultations, surgery, and three months of radiation therapy.

"Ever since radiation treatment was completed in the spring of 2018, our son has made continuous improvement with the host of medical issues associated with the brain tumor. Follow-up MRI scans every six months show the tumor site and surrounding tissue to be stable/unchanged. He is back to living on his own, working, and enjoying life."

Wes Langley (MSO-68): "You just outdid yourselves on the last magazine (April 2021). Ya can't just sit down and go through it in a few minutes anymore—keep up the massive, good work."

NSA Life Member **Davis Perkins** (NCSB-72) had his painting "Stemple Ranch" selected as an Honorable Mention in the Excellence in Traditional Fine Art Competition. Davis has his work in permanent collections of the Smithsonian Institution, the Pentagon and the Alaska State Museum among other institutions.

Heard over the internet that ex-NSA President **Doug Houston** (RAC-73) had some health issues so contacted Doug: "First issue was afib/dfib, ambulance ride, helicopter ride to Missoula, a new pacemaker/defib device, then a stint and back to pickleball." The back to pickleball sounds good.

Fred Donner (MSO-59) writes: "When I compiled the Smokejumper Caterpillar Club roster for the 2015 reunion awards, I made a chart of the events wherein 37 smokejumpers had bailed from seven disabled aircraft, two of them twice. I can make that chart available to bases or individuals. I can mail a paper 12x18 suitable for framing or lamination rolled up in a mailing tube to avoid folding for $7. Larger sizes 18x24, 20x30, and 24x36 are available from Staples, and I would price them on request. I think a large one should be hanging at every base. Contact me if interested at *freddonner@frontiernet.net* "

Mark Corbet (LGD-74) commenting on "Special Issue": "Got it today! Good stuff and hard stuff. Way to take it on front and center! The cover image takes on the issue we have been talking so much about, where we can and can't jump."

Bill Bickers (NCSB-72) commenting on "Special Issue" cover photo: "I recognized the fire immediately. The two jumpers were **Jack Wassard** (LGD-77) and me. I believe four trees were struck by lightning."

Got word from **Dell Hessel** (MYC-59) that Cham-

pionship Products has just published his 5th Track & Field book, "Coach Every Event." Del is one of the top T&F coaches in the nation and also a Master Official for USA Track & Field.

Organizations and Human Nature

by Karl Brauneis (Missoula' 77)

I would like to respond to the articles Jay J. Jones authored on "The Road to a National Wildfire Agency." Young men see things differently than older men. I used to believe the same type of organization would function the same wherever you went in the country. While traveling the nation on incident command, I came to realize that forests and districts operate at a wide variety of efficiency and effectiveness. The organization is the same, but the people are different, and one outfit might receive an A, while another an F in effectiveness. Some football teams excel and win, others loose. Both teams play with 11 men on the field at a time.

With age and wisdom, you learn that to defy human nature with new organizations is often a waste of time and energy. My observation: Man is by nature tribal, territorial, and concerned with power and the consolidation of power for control. The founding fathers of the United States understood this and developed a system of government that would limit the raw power of human nature at the federal level and keep the true power decentralized further with "We the People" at the state level closest to the ground.

Centralized organizations lead to consolidated power and control. Only at unique points in time has this ever worked in noncombat situations. True, a very good king can get more done than any other form of government or organization, but try to name a few such good kings in history. It's a challenge.

Centralized organizations achieve their ultimate goal only after multiple layers of bureaucracy have been constructed and built in. For example: The stove-piped law enforcement organization of the US Forest Service created an entire new bureaucracy within a bureaucracy. I believe that the defining description of a bureaucracy is not to solve problems but rather to manage problems to justify it's existence. Centralized bureaucracies are very good at this.

A wise man will develop organizations that play to the human strengths of tribal and territorial behavior and minimize the weakness of greed in power and control at the core of our nature. In essence, wise men design systems to decentralize and build local esprit de corps. Think of the old system of a smokejumper base close to the ground (Cave Junction) and the old district rangers who truly managed and led those on their districts. The skipper of a navy destroyer is God on that ship. He will listen to and take advice from the admiralty while at sea, but he will make all the final decisions (read *The Good Shephard* by C.S. Forester or see the movie *Greyhound* based upon the book) on the bridge of his ship. One ship with one leader, one jump base with one leader, one district with one leader. All decentralized. All responsible for what happens on that ship, on that jump base or on that district. Yesterday, a District Ranger took responsibility with full authority for the land he was charged to steward. Today, a District Ranger will refer you to law enforcement. Tomorrow, to fire. But who has the ultimate responsibility for what happens on the land?

The Cheyenne woman Kate Bighead said about the Indian Wars, "It was about the land. It was always about the land." Many firefighters today are not woodsmen. They do not know of the land the way our old militia in fire and law enforcement understood it. I told my rookie firefighters that my goal was actually to make woodsmen of them first. Then firefighters. The same applies to law enforcement. Why? Because it is about the land. In the US Forest Service, it must always be about the land.

Human nature—ignore it at your own risk. Decentralize organizations. Never overlap organizations that confuse lines of authority. And it's the land. It's always about the land. Chief Forester Gifford Pinchot and President Theodore Roosevelt understood this. Pinchot decentralized and put in the best men for the job and let them go forth and do good. Roosevelt busted up the huge, centralized corporations or trusts. Roosevelt and Pinchot agreed that the National Forests must be managed locally for the local community, the local farmer, the local woodsman, and rancher. The land and the local community. The essence of the human element of the National Forest system.

Jump at the Chance!

Mike Bina (Missoula '68)

Our jumps on fires were not chance endeavors. Nothing was left to chance. We were carefully hand-picked from the "best of the best" based on our prior district or Hotshot crew work performance. We went through rigorous "not for the faint of heart" training. Risks were calculated with many precautions and redundant "belt and suspender" safeguards. We were extremely well-trained, in peak physical condition, and thoroughly prepared.

As we descended from our DC-3, or from whatever unique aircraft gave us a "one-way" ride to the fire, we often encountered towering trees, rugged rocks, steep inclines, and "oh yes," a burning fire. No two jumps or fires were the same. With each, we faced multiple, never consistent, and highly variable scenarios. We had to think on our feet and adapt on the spot. With our boots firmly on the ground, we were ready for whatever was presented to us.

Long ago many of us "hung up" our favorite pair of Whites for lighter footwear with fewer laces. We also replaced our Pulaski for a less-demanding leaf blower and yard rake. Now, however, we have another unique smokejumper opportunity. While we are no longer on a real fire jump list ready for a "They burn—We earn" fire call, we now can qualify to be on the **"Keep the Flame" Legacy Jump List.**

The Legacy Jump List is an opportunity for jumpers to "give back" by paying a debt of gratitude to smokejumping, considering all the tangible benefits we derived from the experience. The Legacy Jump List is an endowment fund that will ensure the NSA's financial future. It will allow our association to more fully serve our smokejumping community by preserving our past history and traditions and guaranteeing future member benefits. The endowment fund principal grows three ways. The first is by jumpers now making "living gifts" of $5,000 or more of cash, property, or stock. The second way is by members placing the NSA in their wills or naming it as a life insurance beneficiary. The third is that the funds are invested and appreciate in value.

The good news: By being on the "Keep the Flame" Jump List, there is no danger of hanging up, having to dig fireline, mopping up, or packing out.

John McIntosh (MSO-60) is one jumper who recently "jumped at the chance" to place the NSA in his will. Other jumpers, like **Doug Stinson**

John McIntosh, on the right, is pictured with two other unidentified Missoula jumpers in 1962.

(CJ-54) have decided to make an immediate "living gift" of stock that the NSA was able to sell and add to its endowment.

John jumped for four years and made 48 jumps. On his last jump, he was seriously injured. He grew up near Columbia, South Carolina, and, beginning in 1957, worked for three summers for the Kelly Creek Ranger Station in Idaho. The first year he applied to be a smokejumper, he was not accepted because of being a few pounds too heavy. Motivated to qualify the next summer, he lost the necessary weight and reapplied.

He tells the story about his serious injury: "On my final jump, it was a four-man fire and I was the squad leader. It was August 13, 1963, in the Cannon District on the Clearwater N.F. We jumped from a DC-3. I remember thinking that we had flown past our jump spot. The spotter was in training and he misjudged the jump spot. I jumped and immediately knew I was going to land in the trees. I was hung up for about 10-15 seconds. Then the chute that had blown into the side of the tree did not hold me. My weight pulled the chute out and I dropped 50-60 feet. I sustained serious, life-threatening injuries that included a broken back, two broken wrists, and a fractured ankle. I was paralyzed for 5-6 weeks. The accident happened at approximately 8:00 a.m. and they flew over another load of approximately 12 jumpers. They made a helicopter landing spot. I was put in a stokes litter, strapped to the outside of the helicopter, and evacuated to Missoula. It was about a 100-mile flight to the hospital. I was completely paralyzed. I could not move one muscle, including my head. When I arrived at the hospital, they immediately took me into surgery. They operated two or three times. The 2nd day in the hospital, the nurse discovered that my ankle was also fractured. I stayed in the hospital about a month until Labor Day. My parents had to arrange for a private plane to come and pick me up and take me back to South Carolina. When I got to South Carolina, I was admitted to the Columbia Hospital (now Richland Memorial), where I spent an additional two months."

After smokejumping John attended Presbyterian College in South Carolina and later graduated from the University of South Carolina Law School. After Law School, he became a Public Defender. Later he was a state prosecutor becoming the Prosecution Section Chief of the South Carolina Attorney General's Office. He then became a First Assistant US Attorney and then was named Chief Deputy Attorney General of South Carolina serving for over 23 years. Following his retirement, he was legal counsel to the Governor of South Carolina.

John said he enjoyed the smokejumping adventure and wanted to support the smokejumper organization by placing the NSA in his will. He was grateful to smokejumping for it being an organization that was committed to the task and gave him a sense of responsibility and pride. He said, "I loved smokejumping, and the people involved in it were a great group of people. Smokejumping completely changed my personal life because of the near fatal accident. I would have had to go into the service, but got a student deferment and stayed in school. I am fortunate that I was able to walk again and lead a successful career."

John, thank you for expressing your appreciation to the National Smokejumper Association. We appreciate your legacy gift that will continue to give back to our association benefiting fellow jumpers now and those in the future.

If you want to have your name added to the **"Keep the Flame" Legacy Jump List***, or need more information, please contact Chuck Sheley at* chucksheley@gmail.com *or 503.893.0436 or Mike Bina at* beanuh1@yahoo.com *or 704.905.3399.*

1957 McCall prior to fire jump. *L-R Kneeling: John Parkes, Joel Chase. L-R Standing: John Austin, Ken Wilder, Richard Peterson, Ron Dunn, Thad Duel, Brent Wynn. (Courtesy J. Parkes)*

Travis Atkins Awarded Medal of Honor

by Chuck Sheley (Cave Junction '59)

On March 27, 2019, Travis, son of **Jack** (MSO-68) and Elaine Atkins, was awarded the Medal of Honor posthumously by the President in a ceremony at the White House. Sergeant Atkins was originally awarded the Distinguished Service Cross for his actions.

In the October 2011 issue of *Smokejumper*, **Carl Gidlund** (MSO-58) wrote an excellent article about Travis in an issue honoring our veterans. We need to re-read Carl's work:

Atkins' Courage Likely Saved Lives of Squad Members

Staff Sgt. Travis Atkins, son of Elaine and Jack Atkins (MSO-68) of Bozeman, Montana, was killed June 1, 2007, by a suicide bomber who detonated an explosive near a mosque in al-Yusufiyah, Iraq. He was 31.

A member of the 10th Mountain Division, Atkins was on his second tour of duty in Iraq. Because of his leadership skills, he led a squad of 15 soldiers.

Atkins and several other U.S. soldiers were on patrol when they observed four suspicious Iraqis. The Iraqis tried to run away, but Atkins caught one and took him to the ground. The man detonated a suicide bomb attached to his vest, killing himself and Atkins.

A second Iraqi man then began to run at the other soldiers. He also detonated a suicide bomb but killed only himself. The other two men fled.

Atkins died the way he lived: aggressive, tenacious, and eager to get his job done.

When his father heard the details, he wasn't surprised. "I said to myself, 'That's Travis. He's not going to let that son of a bitch get away.' "

"He loved the Army. He did an excellent job," said his mother. "He was well thought of by his subordinates and his superior officers."

Atkins attended Bozeman High School and Kemper Military School in Missouri, eventually earning his GED. After high school, he worked as a painter, poured concrete, and worked in a snowmobile shop.

He enlisted in November 2000 and, according to his mother, "When he joined the Army, that's when he found his niche."

Atkins was initially sent to Iraq for 10 months beginning in March 2003, the start of the war. Following his first tour there, he left the Army, attended the University of Montana and worked in the building trades. He re-enlisted in the Army in December 2005 and was sent back to Iraq in the summer of 2006.

Atkins had already survived two roadside bombs, so he knew the risks of being in Iraq, said his father, a Vietnam veteran.

Atkins joined the Army because he wanted to serve his country, according to Nancy Sander, an Army Reserve nurse who had known him since he was in the fifth grade.

"He also enjoyed the discipline and camaraderie the Army offered," she said, "and he was a good, hardworking guy. He was totally courageous. He probably saved those other guys from being killed."

Atkins wasn't very big – perhaps 5-foot-7 and about 150 pounds. He didn't tower over a crowd, but people still looked up to him, according to Marcus Graf, who served with Atkins in Iraq.

"I looked up to him and respected him more than anyone I ever met," Graf said.

Travis has received the Distinguished Service Cross. Travis's other awards and decorations include a Purple Heart, Bronze Star Medal, Army Commendation Medal, Army Achievement Medal, Combat Infantryman's Badge and Air Assault Badge.

In addition to his parents, who live in Bozeman, and a sister who lives in Washington state, Atkins left an 11-year-old son, Trevor,

who lives in Minnesota.

In the March 27, 2019, Medal of Honor ceremony, Travis' son, Trevor, accepted the award from the President along with his sister, Jennifer. Also accepting the award were Jack and Elaine Atkins.

"In attendance were the Vice President, the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs, and the Secretary of the Army, as well as five previous living recipients of the award and numerous distinguished members of the military. Witnesses to the award also included the three men whose lives Atkins saved in his selfless act."

In a March 2019 Ceremony at Fort Drum, the home of the 10th Mountain Division, the Atkins Functional Fitness Facility was named after Sgt. Atkins. Jack and Elaine were in attendance.

Sgt. Aaron Hall, Atkin's friend, addressed the crowd, "Though I knew Travis for only a year before his ultimate sacrifice, it was enough to have a significant impact on my life, both professionally and personally. Travis always personalized the term 'quiet professional.' He was a leader in the truest sense of the word."

To conclude the ceremony, Maj. Gen. Stephen J. Townsend, Fort Drum and 10th Mountain Division commander, joined Jack and Elaine Atkins in unveiling a plaque dedicating the facility with its new name, the Atkins Functional Fitness Facility.

Where Have You Been Hiding, D. B. Cooper?

by Sheridan Peterson (Missoula '53)

Reprinted from July 2007 ***Smokejumper***

Remember D. B. Cooper? He was the guy who hijacked a Boeing 727 some 35 years ago and parachuted into the woods somewhere south of Seattle with $200,000. Well, the FBI is still looking for him. That's what Pete found out when he returned home from his computer class recently. Stuck in his door was a calling card from Mary Jean Fryar, special agent with the Federal Bureau of Investigation. She had scrawled above her name: "Please call. Thank you." Peterson recounted his encounter with the government. (Ed.)

At the time, I was 77 and living at a senior center in downtown Santa Rosa. The previous year I had moved there from Deer Park, Washington, where I'd spent the past four years writing a lightly fictionalized, eyewitness documentary of the Vietnam War.

The next day, two women in look-alike formal attire showed up at my door flashing their FBI badges at me. "I haven't seen one of those since I was with the Civil Rights Movement in Mississippi," I said. I had gone there during the summer of 1965 to set up a freedom school and got arrested for taking part in a protest march through downtown Jackson. At the time, the FBI was partial to the white segregationists.

Actually, the FBI had good reason to suspect me. Friends and associates agreed that I was without a doubt D.B. Cooper. There were too many circumstances involved for it to be a coincidence. For one thing, I could have known all about the 727, for in the early 1960s, I had been a technical editor at Boeing and, on top of that, I was an experienced skydiver.

I was president and founder of the Boeing Skydiving Club, and I later jumped at the Issaquah Sky Port, earning an instructor's license. Fellow jumpers remembered me as a maverick. I had a penchant for experimenting with homemade bat wings. And, oddly enough, Issaquah was where the elusive Cooper got the parachutes for his getaway.

At the time of the heist, I was 44 years old. That was the approximate age Cooper was assumed to have been, and I closely resembled

sketches of the hijacker. But what was even more incriminating was the photo of me simulating a skydiving maneuver for Boeing's news sheet. I was wearing a suit and tie—the same sort of garb Cooper had worn, right down to the Oxford loafers. It was noted that skydivers don't ordinarily dress so formally.

But where was I? That's what the FBI wanted to know. During the summer of '65, the Federation of Teachers had sent me by Greyhound bus to Mississippi to set up a freedom school in Amite County. From there, the U.S. Department of Defense had sent me to the Philippines to teach the dependents at Clark Air Base. I had moved to Vietnam by June 1966.

Checking my tax returns, the FBI noted that from June 1966 to August 1970 and from March 1973 to April 1975, I had worked for a number of U.S. contractors and government agencies.

The two FBI women wanted to know where I was located from August 1970 to March 1973. There was no work record during that span. The heist occurred in November 1971. They assumed that I had come back to the states at that time, hijacked the 727, and returned to Vietnam by 1973. "Good try," I said. "However, I was in Nepal at the time, and I can prove it," I added, handing them copies of my children's birth certificates. "They were born there."

One's Civil Liberties

Next, the FBI agents asked for my DNA. They needed to be sure. Things just didn't seem to add up. I protested that it was a violation of my civil liberties, but then I relented. It would only confirm their suspicions if I refused. They asserted they had Cooper's DNA, which they collected from several cigarette butts he had left on the plane.

The younger of the two women held out a plastic container with two cotton swabs. "Simply rub the inside of either cheek," she instructed. The other agent wanted my fingerprints. Both women insisted on details. They wanted the names, dates and locations of everywhere I had worked since November 1971.

For more than a week, I didn't tell anyone. Who would have believed me? D.B. Cooper! He was a legend and after such a long time. So many books had been written about his escapades, and at least two movies had been filmed. Then I remembered the calling card. That was proof. I wondered if I would have believed it. No, probably not.

Sheridan Peterson 1976 (Courtesy S. Peterson)

While speaking on the phone with my son, Mark, in Boise, Idaho, I said quite casually, "The FBI thinks I'm D.B. Cooper." The revelation came as no surprise to him. He'd known that for a long time. Soon after the 1971 heist, agents visited his mother in Bakersfield, California. They wanted to know where her ex-spouse was. "Could he have been D.B. Cooper?" they asked. "Yes, that sounded like something he would do."

Under Their Noses

For thirty-three years, the FBI had been looking for me, but it wasn't as though I'd been hiding. I had returned to the U.S. several times since then and found employment. In 1975, prior to going to Saudi Arabia, I'd worked in Redondo Beach, near Los Angeles. I was special assistant to Northrup University's dean of the College of Engineering for the Santa Rosa Public Schools and taught journalism at Napa Community College.

Later I headed an Upward Bound program for disadvantaged youth in the Watts section of Los Angeles. Then I was a technical writer for Garrett Aircraft, Inc., in Compton, California. I'd resided in San Jose and worked in Sunny-

vale as a technical writer. Where on earth had the FBI been all this time? Isn't there a central clearinghouse?

"Did Cooper survive?" the older woman asked. "What do you think?" "No, absolutely not," I replied. "Why not?" "Well, for one thing, he wasn't a skydiver," I said. "Obviously he'd never made a delayed freefall. Probably never jumped from a plane before—certainly not a 727."

"How's that?" "Well, someone had picked up two main chutes and two reserves at the Issaquah Sky Port as Cooper had instructed," I explained, "Whoever picked them up didn't know anything about skydiving rigs. No one was there at the time, so this guy grabbed a skydiving rig and a pilot's emergency chute as well as a genuine reserve and a dummy reserve used for instructional purposes. The shroud lines of the dummy reserve had been daisy chained so that the canopy could be shoved back into the pack easily."

"That wasn't Cooper's fault," the agent retorted. "I know," I said, "but D.B. did everything wrong. First of all, he picked up the pilot's chute instead of the skydiving rig. Falling at an estimated speed of over 100 miles per hour, the canopy's opening shock would have been devastating. Skydiving rigs are packed in such a way that they open gradually, lessening the opening shock. Furthermore, Cooper took the dummy reserve. Any skydiver would have known that immediately.

"What's more, as far as we know, he had neither an altimeter nor stopwatch, and besides, he quite obviously had no idea what the elevation of the terrain was. Consequently, he wouldn't have known when to pull the ripcord.

"There was also an 18-knot wind. Not being a skydiver, he probably opened the chute immediately, and at 10,000 feet, the wind would have carried him possibly 30 miles out over the Columbia River. I'm assuming that there would be a downdraft over the river sucking him into the water. That probably accounts for the $500 found buried in the sand along the shore. The bills were traced to the money D.B. had stolen."

"How about you?" the agent asked. "Would you have survived?" "Absolutely," I said. "First of all, I'd have known which chute and reserve to take. Besides," I added, "I would have had an altimeter and a stopwatch and had an approximate idea of the elevation of the terrain.

"I would also have insisted upon a helmet and have been wearing boots and warm clothing. And above all, I'd have gloves, warm gloves. What's more, I'd have needed a flashlight to spot my landing. Cooper was not foolhardy. He was stupid," I declared.

Jumping from a 727

"What's it like jumping from a 727?" the younger woman asked. "Yeah. What's it like?" the other said. I laughed, mockingly, shaking my head in disbelief. "I've never jumped from a 727."

Perhaps my tone of voice was somewhat misgiving, because they later asked again. This time I got my two skydiver log books in a stained tattered cloth cover. They dated back to my very first sport parachute jump August 1962 from a Cessna 175 at Auburn, Wash., with the Boeing Skydivers. All 270 freefalls were recorded right up to the last one from a Cessna 182 in Spokane, Wash., June 28, 1999.

The agents wondered: How had I started making parachute jumps? … I had learned to jump with the U.S. Forest Service Smokejumpers in Missoula, Mont. I made 30 static-line jumps into the Northwest's vast wilderness areas in order to fight forest fires.

Over the years, I had jumped from a Ford Trimotor, a Travelair, a C-47 Dakota, an H-34 Helicopter, an HUB Huey Helicopter, a Soviet Y-5, and all models of the Cessna, but never a Boeing 727.

The agents wondered: How had I started making parachute jumps? Had it been with the military? No, I was a Marine in World War II, and had learned to jump with the U.S. Forest Service Smokejumpers in Missoula, Mont. I

made 30 static-line jumps into the Northwest's vast wilderness areas in order to fight forest fires.

Several days later, one of the agents paid me a second visit. She assured me that there were no matches for my DNA. However, they were checking me out at my address the previous year in Deer Park.

I was perplexed. Surely, they didn't think that I, alias D.B., had been camping out there for 33 years, hiding out in the woods. What were they expecting to find—membership in one of many Aryan Nation guerrilla bands scattered throughout the Northwest? Did they think I was some sort of right-wing bigot?

On her way out the door, the agent asked: "Why have you been living in so many communist countries?"

"Only one," I said. "Only China." There was a government that I loathed, for I had witnessed the worst of the Tiananmen massacre at Muxidi, some four kilometers west of the square in 1989. Two of my students at the College of Economic Management had been killed that fateful night.

"How about Vietnam?" the agent retorted. "I was on the capitalist side there," I replied. So that was it, I thought. D.B. Cooper might simply be the cover story. That makes sense. But what was the real story? What did they want of me? Would I ever know?

It was like wanting to know who killed Kennedy, or whatever happened to the weapons of mass destruction, or what was Saddam Hussein doing in a hole in the ground. Where were his ardent supporters? Would the truth ever be known? I wondered all of these things, but I knew answers wouldn't come anytime soon—that was for sure.

Pete, 94, died January 8, 2021. His obit is in this issue. (Ed.)

Ode To Bill Allred—Always Happy, Fun and Humble

by Art Morrison (Missoula '68)

I knew Bill as a smokejumper, truck driver, elk hunter and airplane driver.

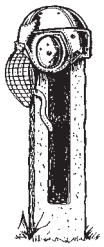
Night mop-up with Bill was always a treat. We'd take a break about 0400 beside a hunker fire. Bill would throw coffee into the boiling gallon can and start telling stories. One by one we'd mosey into the dark to take a nap until Bill was left alone talking to the fire and his canteen cup. A great squad boss for a night mop-up.

Doug Maryott (MSO-71) and **Bill Duffey** (MSO-71) and I hooked up with Bill and **Ron Pierce** (MSO-66) for a late season, deep snow elk hunt. I volunteered to get on the tracks of a herd that crossed into a couple square miles of steep country. Others fanned out to hunt along and near to the roads. Late afternoon I saw the meandering tracks of elk, flanked the tracks, and soon saw them. By the time I field dressed the elk that I had killed, it was nearly dark and was a long hike back to camp. The others were driving the roads looking for me, and Ron picked me up.

The next morning Bill and I hiked in to cut up and pack out the elk. Sure enough a whole herd of living ones were milling around the same area. Bill emptied his rifle, and I started handing him shells until one finally fell over. At first, I thought it was from fright but, as it turned out, Bill had made a well-placed shot.

I told these stories at Pilot Bill's retirement gathering in Albuquerque and again at my retirement in 2012. I sang happy birthday to Bill in late January. We had a long visit, and I think Kathy was there too. Bill was a friend of many, and as far as I know, a foe to none.

Bill died March 24, 2021, after a short battle with cancer. (Ed.)



Off The List

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

Chuck Sheley
10 Judy Lane
Chico, CA 95926

Our research team has recently added over 200 obits to the NSA website as part of our History Preservation Project. None of these have been published before. Check our website obits for this new information. (Ed.)

James L. Hagemeier (Missoula '57)

Jim died April 23, 2021, in Missoula, Montana. He was born November 26, 1937, in Burlington, Iowa. Jim graduated from Iowa State with a degree in landscape architecture and was hired by the Forest Service. He lived and worked in Colorado, learned to ski, and used his architecture skills to develop a ski area. Jim survived an avalanche at Breckenridge that was later written up in "Reader's Digest."

He was promoted in the Forest Service and returned to Missoula in 1986 with a position of regional director of planning. Jim retired in 1994 after a 35-year career and enjoyed hunting, skiing, and biking in Montana and Arizona. He jumped at Missoula during the 1957-58 seasons.

William J. "Bill" Baden (McCall '59)

Bill died April 11, 2021. He was living in Boise, Idaho, at the time. Bill graduated from Utah State University with a degree in forest management and jumped at McCall during the 1959 season. Bill had a 32-year career with the USFS and retired in 1989 as the Forest Service Director National Interagency Fire Center, Boise, Idaho. He was a District Ranger in R-5 at some time before going to work as the USFS National Prevention Program Leader in the Washington Office.

After retiring from the Forest Service, he went to work for the National Fire Protection Assn. in Boston, MA. One of his duties was to manage the National Wildland/Urban Interface Program whose interagency team developed the Firewise program among other loss mitigation projects. He worked with the National Fire Protection Association 1989-97 and the National Association of State Foresters 1996-2000. Bill and his wife, Susan, did volunteer work at local hospitals for years. Bill was a Life Member of the NSA.

George B. Harpole (Missoula '49)

NSA Life Member George Harpole died April 8, 2021, in Clifton, Colorado. He was a rookie smokejumper in 1949 and also jumped during the fire seasons of 1950 and 1952 to help pay his tuition to earn a Bachelor's Degree in Business Administration from the University of Montana. He had 11 fire jumps over those three seasons. Later he earned a Master's Degree in Forestry Economics from the University of California at Berkeley.

George then spent 25 years working for the U.S. Forest Service as a Forestry Conservation Economist in Berkeley, California, and Madison, Wisconsin, followed by another 25 years as an independent consultant focusing on the creation of Stewardships in the forested areas of New Mexico, Arizona and Colorado.

His focus as a consultant was related to fire mitigation removals and utilization of small diameter trees and flash fuel materials by the way of creating Stewardships that could be contracted with the Federal, State and/or private forest authorities. George formally retired at the age of 85 upon the publication of his co-authored Department of Agriculture Research Paper (General Technical Report 236) entitled "The Evolutionary History of OSB Board" published in February of 2015.

H. Ames Harrison (Missoula '54)

Ames died April 8, 2021, in Springfield, Virginia, of cancer. He was born February 18, 1934, in Springfield. Ames graduated high school in Scottsdale, Arizona, drafted and served two years

in the Army, attended University of Massachusetts, Amherst in 1955, receiving a BS in Forestry. After college, Ames worked for the US Forest Service, starting as a smokejumper out of Missoula, Montana. He jumped the 1954 season before starting a 30-year career with the USFS.

When Ames retired from the Department of Agriculture, he stayed busy in real estate and the home remodeling business. Ames loved to explore, which led him to travel to each of the 50 American States, Sweden, England, Scotland, Panama, as well as Canada and Mexico.

Craig J. Lindh (Missoula '59)

Craig, known as the "go-to-person" for land status in Southeast Alaska and one of the key founders of Eaglecrest, passed away March 1, 2021, at the age of 81. Born August 24, 1939, in Missoula, Montana, Craig spent many years honing his outdoor skills—hunting, fishing, hiking and camping. By his senior year in high school, he had already spent a summer alone on a fire lookout station.

Craig graduated from the University of Montana with a degree in Forestry in 1961. Upon graduation he was inducted into the US Army where he served for two years. He finally began his career in the USFS in Kooskia, Idaho. At the first opportunity, he transferred to Juneau to serve as the Snow Ranger for the Dan Moller Ski Trail. When he learned of plans underway to construct a road up the trail toward Third Cabin that would end in an avalanche area, he questioned whether there might be a place more suitable for a winter recreation site. The Fish Creek area was selected and Craig designed and wrote the first prospectus for bids for the Eaglecrest ski area.

Once Eaglecrest was running, Craig put his Forestry degree to use for the State of Alaska Department of Economic Development, and later for Governmental Coordination, and as special consultant on forest-related projects for the State. Under Governor Hammond, he was contracted by the Department of Natural Resources to coordinate the 1982 national forest land selection Statehood Act. He was later hired to reconstitute lands for the Mental Health Trust in Southeast Alaska.

In addition to arranging complicated land exchanges, Craig managed to climb some of the surrounding mountains, take his family hiking, camping, and picnicking, find powder on the icefield for helicopter skiing and support music and theater in the community. He was appointed to the State Board of Forestry in 2000, served for five years on the Board of the Southeast Alaska Land Trust and was a member of the Society of American Foresters. Craig jumped at Missoula during 1959-60 seasons.

Robert P. Marshall (Missoula '45)

Bob, 96, died February 13, 2021, in Visalia, California. He was born September 18, 1924, and was a Quaker. Bob was drafted into Civilian Public Service in 1943 from West Chester, Pennsylvania, and his occupation at the time was "Student." He jumped at Missoula during the 1945 season and had seven practice, seven fire, and two rescue jumps, recording one of the higher numbers for that season.

He was discharged from CPS in 1946 and went to William Penn College in Iowa where he received his bachelor's degree. Bob married Joy Cope in 1948 and they had three children. He was the Executive Director of Self Help Enterprises.

Starr Jenkins (Cave Junction '48)

NSA Life Member Starr Jenkins, 95, died February 15, 2021, in San Luis Obispo, California. He was born in Chicago on June 1, 1925. Starr entered the Navy at 17 during WWII but was then given an appointment to West Point. Starr liked the Navy and, after six months at West Point, found a way to leave the Army and return to the Navy, being stationed at Treasure Island in the San Francisco Bay. After his discharge at the end of WWII, Starr entered the University of New Mexico where he got his BA in 1948. He rookied at Cave Junction in 1948 and transferred to Missoula for the 1949 season.

Starr got his master's degree at Stanford, and his Ph.D. back at the University of New Mexico. In 1961 Cal Poly, San Luis Obispo, hired him to teach English and Literature, a career he loved for 28 years. Summers, he frequently worked as a Park Ranger in Yosemite. His article published in the magazine *Nature* about what needed to be

done to control and offset environmental damage from overcrowding in Yosemite was picked up by the U.S. Secretary of Interior, who implemented all 14 of Starr's recommendations.

Starr's non-fiction and fiction articles and stories were published in *Look Magazine*, *Life Magazine*, the *Saturday Evening Post*, *Man Against Nature*, and he published a number of books, like *Brothers in the Sky-49* about adventures smokejumping. He was also a frequent contributor to *Smokejumper* magazine over the years. Starr's brother **Hugh** (MSO-49) was killed in Korea December 24, 1953, and posthumously awarded the Silver Star.

Herbert John Fischer (Missoula '57)

Herb died April 4, 2021, at his home in Gamaliel, Arkansas. He was born October 2, 1937, in Shreveport, Louisiana. Herb jumped at Missoula 1957-60.

From **Roland Pera** (MSO-56): "I regret to inform all of you that Herb passed away yesterday, Easter morning. He had been fighting health issues for some time. If you didn't know Herb, he attended the University of Mississippi and spent lots of years as a pilot with Pan Am Airways, and then United Airlines. After he was forced to retire, he flew for Warren Buffet's private jet company, Net Jets, which I think he dearly enjoyed. I remember he told everyone on his first flight with them, that his passenger was Julia Roberts.

"He was a lot of fun to be around. The Missoula girls loved the boys with their southern accents. Needless to say, he had no trouble getting dates. He was a lifelong percussionist. Wherever he lived, he played the drums with some kind of a group with gusto. Herb lived in Dallas most of his working life."

William P. Allred (Missoula '63)

Bill died March 24, 2021, after a short battle with cancer. He was born January 18, 1944, in Silver City, New Mexico. Bill attended high school in Reserve, NM, and graduated from Western New Mexico with a degree in Animal Husbandry.

During this time Bill was hired by the USFS as a firefighter in the Gila NF. In 1963 Bill rookied at Missoula and stayed with it until he was drafted in 1969 into the U.S Army. After serving at Ft. Sill, Oklahoma, he returned to smokejumping in 1973. As a smokejumper foreman, load master, and spotter, Bill led jumpers throughout the western US, making hundreds of jumps from various aircraft into wildland fires.

Bill decided to move to the front of the plane in 1982. He was hired as a pilot in Albuquerque and trained as a transport and lead plane pilot. Bill was also a MAFFS (Military Airborne Firefighting System) instructor for the Air National Guard and the Air Force Reserves. This included a deployment to Indonesia to fight wildfires there. Bill had over 8000 flight hours in single and multi-engine aircraft including a type rating in the DC-3. Bill attained the ranks of Master Parachute rigger, Airline Transport pilot, and Flight instructor by the FAA. He retired from the USFS in 1999.

Bill jumped at Missoula 1963-64, 66-67,72-84 and at Grangeville 1965, 1968, and 1971.

John Kiernan "Jack" Dunne (MSO-46)

Jack died March 19, 2021. He was born December 25, 1925, in Spokane, Washington. He started his Forest Service work during WWII in 1943 on the Libby Ranger District. He went into the Army Air Force in late '43 and was a tail gunner on a B-29. The 29's flew out of Guam and were involved in those dangerous missions over the Japanese mainland. Jack flew 30+ missions and was awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross and several other air medals.

Back from the war in 1946, Jack and a friend applied for smokejumping and were accepted. Both were sawyers and that probably helped as he was the "tool man" at Missoula during his career there. He jumped four seasons (46-49) while attending Western Montana College at Dillon and getting his teaching credential. Jack taught 5th and 6th grade for 33 years, mostly in Whitefish. Jack had 15 fire jumps over those four seasons.

Jack's teaching career came to a close in 1985, but when he was even in his '90s, he would be recognized by former students who remembered his walls of chalk boards and how he made lessons come alive.

To show that jumpers are the same, whatever the generation, in a 2004 interview with *Smoke-*

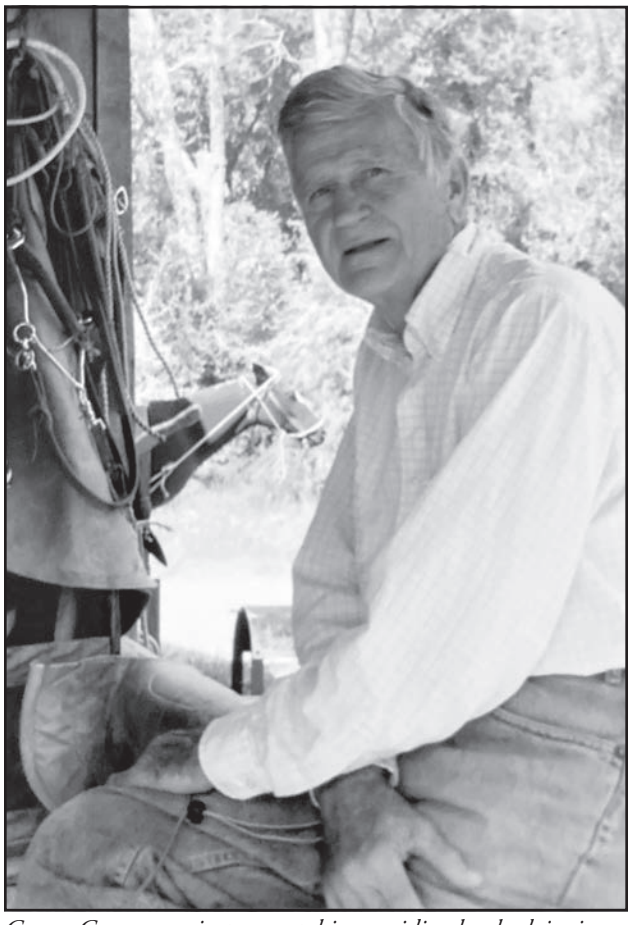
jumper magazine, Jack recounts the time when a circus moved into town at the Fairgrounds. There was a baby elephant that was "borrowed" and taken to the barracks. When the late night drinkers arrived, some of them must have sworn off the bottle when they opened the door.

George W. Gowen (Missoula '54)

NSA Life Member George Gowen died March 14, 2021, at his home in New York City. He was born in Livorno, Italy, on September14,1929. George practiced law as a Partner at Dunnington, Bartholow & Miller, and for seven years at his firm Fryer, Ross & Gowen before returning to Dunnington in 1994.

He graduated from Princeton in 1952 and served in the Army before jumping at Missoula during the 1954 season. George graduated from the University of Virginia Law School in 1957 and married Marcia in 1959.

For decades he was counsel to leading sports organizations. He started his long 40-year relationship with the United States Tennis Association (USTA) in 1968 and he advised and counseled 18 Presidents. George was inducted into the Eastern Tennis Hall of Fame in 2006. He served on numerous other boards during his career and was a major legal help in establishing the NSA.



George Gowen was instrumental in providing legal advice in the founding of the NSA. (Courtesy Lee Gowen)

When asked what he savored, he remarked, "What I do savor with pride and affection, my wife and home, our children, their husbands and the grandchildren. After these all else is footnotes."

John Jack Ridgway (Cave Junction '60)

Jack, 80, died January 4, 2021, in West Dover, Vermont. He was born September 25, 1940. Jack married Margit August 26, 1972. He jumped at Cave Junction 1960-61 and spent three years at Villanova University and one year at San Francisco State before going into the Marine Corps where he flew Sikorsky H-34s for three years, including a year in Vietnam. Jack spent 35 years in the building trade, and his occupation at time of death was listed as Real Estate Agent.

In September 1986, Jack was the Flight Engineer on Pam Am Flight 73 which was hijacked on the ground by terrorists in Karachi, Pakistan. In the end there were 21 dead, including two Americans. An even greater tragedy was averted by the quick action of the cockpit crew led by Jack. The terrorists had planned to destroy the plane once airborne, killing themselves and the 400 passengers.

The 747 cockpit stood 32 feet off the ground. There was an "escape reel," but none of the crew had any training and were hesitant to use that system. Jack, recalling his smokejumper letdown training, exited the cockpit and notified authorities at the terminal. The pilot and co-pilot were still in the cockpit and hesitant to use the system but finally did, leaving the terrorists with no flight crew. After 16 hours of negotiations, the hijackers started shooting and throwing grenades. Jack was a NSA Life Member.

Robert E. "Bob" Reed (Missoula '60)

Bob died March 7, 2021, in Stevensville, Montana. He was born August 25, 1940, in Missoula and his childhood was spent exploring the mountain lakes of Western Montana. Upon graduation from Sentinel High School, he attended the

University of Montana and played football for the Griz. He then went on to be a smokejumper for the 1960-61 seasons. In 1962, he and Betty Olson were married and enjoyed 59 years together.

Bob began his career early as a car salesman at H.O. Bell Ford, and manager for 93 Chrysler Plymouth Dodge in Missoula, before moving to Stevensville where he opened Country Carriage and later Reed's Auto Mart.

His love of sports led him to start the Stevensville Booster Club, that with the help of many others, spent countless months building the current track and football field.

Daniel W. Stohr (Missoula '53)

Dan died in the home he built on January 1, 2021, at the age of 91. He was born in Wallace, Idaho, on July 29, 1929. He was the son of famous backcountry pilot Penn Stohr. Dan grew up with airplanes in his blood. As a boy, Dan would fly with his father throughout the mountains of Idaho and Montana. By the age of 18, Dan owned his own J-3 Piper Cub. He served in the U.S. Naval Reserves during the Korean War and was a smokejumper based in Missoula, MT, for the 1953 season. Dan graduated from the University of Montana in 1955 with a degree in business. Dan was married to his childhood sweetheart, Marian Barber Stohr, for almost 70 years.

Dan was a jack-of-all-trades. He built homes, stilts for his granddaughter, water wheels for his own amusement, and an actual wooden bridge for his great-granddaughter to use to safely cross his irrigation ditch. He was a longtime member of the Optimist Club and loved volunteering at Boise State football games, where he often did a little more football watching than actual volunteering. He also loved getting together with his fellow smokejumpers to swap stories.

Sheridan Louis "Pete" Peterson
(Missoula '53)

Pete, 94, died January 8, 2021, in Santa Rosa, California. He was born May 2, 1926, in Santa Rosa. His July 2007 D.B. Cooper story in *Smokejumper* was noted on a *Fox News* release of his death. A WWII Marine Corps vet, he was a graduate of Santa Rosa Jr. College and the University of Missouri. "During the summer of '65, the Federation of Teachers sent me by Greyhound bus

NSA Good Samaritan Fund Contributions

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

to Mississippi to set up a freedom school in Amite County. From there, the U.S. Department of Defense sent me to The Philippines to teach dependents at Clark Air Base. I had moved to Vietnam by June 1966." The D. B. Cooper heist occurred in November 1971. Questioned by the FBI about his location at the time, "I was in Nepal at the time, and I can prove it handing them copies of my children's birth certificates. They were born there."

"In the early 1960s, I had been a technical editor at Boeing and on top of that, I was an experienced skydiver. I was president and founder of the Boeing Skydiving Club, and I later jumped at the Issaquah Sky Port, earning an instructor's license. Fellow jumpers remembered me as a maverick. For example, I had a penchant for experimenting with homemade bat wings. Pete jumped at Missoula during the 1953-54 seasons.

Robert Irey Pino (North Cascades '51)

Bob, 88, died March 4, 2021, at his home in Seattle. He was born November 20, 1932, in Gallup, New Mexico. In the summer of 1943, Bob and his family moved to Omak, Washington. He graduated from high school in Omak in 1951 and rookied at Winthrop that year. Bob jumped the 1951-52 seasons before being drafted into the Army where he spent his tour in Germany.

After the Army Bob jumped the 1955-57 seasons, starting a family tradition for the other Pino boys to become smokejumpers. Brothers Frank, Buck and John all became smokejumpers, as well as John's son Adam. It is thought that the Pino family from Omak had more smokejumpers than any other American family. Later, Bob moved to Seattle to work for the Boeing Aircraft Company. There he met his future wife, Lola Voth. They were married in 1958 and had a son, Eric.

Robert J. "Bob" Scofield (CJ-49)

Bob died December 10, 2020 in Medford, Oregon. Due to wartime enlistments and lack of manpower, Bob started working with the Forest Service at age 16 and had two seasons working in Blister Rust Control and two as a lookout before he went to smokejumping. He was a student at Oregon State in Forest Management and, being very familiar with the Siskiyou NF, Cave Junction was a natural for him to enter the smoke-

CPS smokejumper Hubert Blackwell (MSO-44) holds his nephew John Blackwell (MYC-64) in a 1945 photo. Hubert was killed in a logging accident in Oregon 1952. (Courtesy John Blackwell)

jumper program.

Bob jumped the 1949 (five fire jumps) and '50 (three fire jumps) seasons, but at the end of the 1950 season, he didn't go back to school and was drafted. He was a Sergeant First Class in the Army Signal Corps stationed in Germany.

When he came back from the military in 1953, Bob did his refresher training along with rookie and future astronaut **Stuart Roosa**. He remembers Roosa as a "sharp go-getter." They jumped out of Medford that year, and he made seven fire jumps.

In 1954 he made squadleader and had three fire jumps—a slow season. 1955 was his last year as a jumper, and he made four fire jumps.

In 1955 he graduated from Oregon State with his degree in Forest Management and started a career with the Forest Service as District Ranger on the Routt NF in Colorado. He continued his career with the Forest Service retiring in 1984.

Arnold Morelli (North Cascades '49)

Arnold "Moose" Morelli, a resident of Mariemont, Ohio for 51 years, died October 19, 2020. Born in Cincinnati on June 28, 1928, he graduated from Withrow High School and the University of Cincinnati, where he received a B.A. in Political Science in 1951. He received his LLB from Harvard Law School in 1955 after serving in the Korean conflict.

He came to Cincinnati in 1957 and joined Paxton & Seasongood, then became an Assistant U.S. Attorney and First Assistant U.S. Attorney in 1962. He practiced law with Bauer, Morelli and Heyd for 30 years, specializing in litigation. He will be remembered for several high profile cases and as co-counsel on the Cincinnati Crime Study Committee in 1966.

In 1983 Arnold placed number six of the area's top lawyers according to Cincinnati Magazine. He lectured at University of Cincinnati's Law School and Chase Law School. He was a member of the American College of Trial Lawyers, the American Board of Trial Lawyers, and was included in the Best Lawyers in America, the National Directory of Criminal Lawyers, and Who's Who in Law. From 1972-1976 he served on the Mariemont Board of Education. He jumped at NCSB during the 1949 season.

Good Sam Fund Helps Another Jumper

From Linda Graham, wife of Dave Graham (RDD-70)

We wanted to express our gratitude for the unbelievable gift we recently received and let you know how much your gift helped a fellow smokejumper. Thanks to your generous gift of financial assistance, my husband was able to get a second opinion and receive much needed additional medical treatments. We were able to travel to Portland, Oregon, to have him seen by doctors at Oregon Health and Sciences University, Knight Cancer Institute. Dave just completed two weeks of radiation treatments. He was also seen by the head physician of the Palliative Care who is overseeing his pain management. There is no cure, but the doctors are working to improve Dave's quality of life. That is invaluable. Additionally, he is now awaiting to see if he is a candidate for clinical trials which he is eager to participate in.

"When Dave was first diagnosed with Stage IV metastatic colorectal cancer, he was told he had 14% chance of a five-year survivability. Because he is also diabetic with Stage 3 chronic kidney disease, heart disease, a pacemaker, and triple heart bypass, his chances were not very good. He explained to his doctors that wasn't acceptable and, as a former smokejumper, he had trained physically and mentally to survive and giving up wasn't an option.

They didn't get it and five years later they are still scratching their heads. Thanks to his fellow smokejumpers, you have allowed Dave to carry on his fight against cancer. He survived to witness the birth of his second great grandchild and looks forward to celebrating his 76th birthday this September. As his caregiver and wife, I too cannot thank you enough for your generosity and support. It means so much to both of us. I know Dave would love to hear from his fellow smokejumpers. You can contact Dave through me via Facebook. Dave follows the NSA on Facebook.

(Dave and Linda live in Eugene, Oregon. Ed.)