

THE NATIONAL SMOKEJUMPER
ASSOCIATION

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SMOKEJUMPER

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Check the NSA website



Message from the President



by John Twiss
(Redmond '67)
PRESIDENT

AS WINTER PASSES and another fresh spring comes our way, I am reflecting on the NSA Website Obituary Column and "the ones the wolves brought down." It is particularly hard for me to see smokejumpers that I knew and jumped with on that list. I will always picture them young, tough and indestructible, unable to die from disease or natural causes. We were smokejumpers, and we were sure that old age would never catch up with us. Hell, we would likely die jumping out of airplanes or falling off a mountain.

The NSA Obituaries cause me to think about the original smokejumpers, like the late **Francis Lufkin** (NCSB-40) and **Earl Cooley** (MSO-40), and the procedures, attitude and sense of pride they instilled in all of us who followed. They not only pioneered parachute delivery of men to backcountry fires, they left a good legacy in the Forest Service and set the standards that still shape smokejumping 70 years later!

My smokejumper supervisors at the Redmond Air Center

were World War II and Korean War era smokejumpers. Hard working, bright, no nonsense guys that treated you fairly and expected you to perform. **Jim Allen** (NCSB-46), the late **Hal Weinmann** (NCSB-47), **Tony Percival** (NCSB-54), and the late **David "Skinny" Beals** (MYC-45) shaped my attitude about work, safety, ethics, treatment of people and approach to life. They didn't know it, but I watched every move that they made and everything that they did. They led by example, and I owe each of them for their care and interest.

Jim Allen, a WWII vet, shaped my approach to leadership. He was soft-spoken (a trait I could never master), direct, always saw the big picture, and cared deeply about people. Oh, how I hated to face him after my latest escapade in town or screw-up at the base. He only had to look at me and I knew I had disappointed him again. I was a difficult pupil, but thankfully he was patient.

I hate to read the NSA Obituaries. It brings great sadness, but I will keep looking at the column to remember the exceptional people that I worked with, the adventures we had together, the great leaders, and to remember just who shaped my life. 🙏

Cave Junction Wineries

by Ron Thoreson (Cave Junction '60)

Last September my wife, Joyce, and I journeyed to the Boundary Waters of Minnesota for a week as part of the smokejumper trails program. Jim Cherry organized this project, which also included Chuck and KG Sheley. During our week Chuck and I reminisced about the changes we'd seen in our lifetime and agreed we were in serious danger of getting old! Amongst the changes we noted was

that Missoula, which was once a railroad/ranching town with a small university, now claims more writers and artists in residence per capita than any other city in the world! And Cave Junction, which was just a small logging and Forest Service town, now has some sophisticated, successful wineries with national and international distribution and renown. I agreed to research a bit and try to write an article about Cave Junction's wineries and any links to the jumper base there. It turns out that one of those wineries, Foris, not only has some interesting links to the Cave Junction jumper base, but to Chuck himself. And now for the rest of the story, as Paul Harvey used to say.

First, let me establish my creds as a wine critic. A connoisseur I am not. In the foody world I'd be classed as a gourmand, not a gourmet. I like most all dry wines, particularly reds, and some more than others.

When I grew up in the 50s, I liked to hang out with my Italian and Mexican friends who had the civilized notion of drinking wine with dinner, since Norwegians weren't all that keen on their kids drinking wine anytime.

In 1961 I bummed around Europe for six months. One of the fun things was carrying your own wine bottle and refilling it with vin ordinaire at the local wine shops as you traveled. Aging of these wines was not recommended, as they turned to vinegar in a day or less!

In my lifetime I've seen US wines go from being little recognized or appreciated to international renown. The turning point was the blind wine tasting which has gone into legend as the Judgement of Paris in 1976 when Napa Valley wines won both the red and white classes. The 1973 Stags Leap Cabernet Sauvignon won for red and the 1973 Chateau Montelena won for white over French wines from chateaus with centuries of experience and crusty fame. Following this shock to the French, Julio Gallo was less than gracious and said it was no wonder that the Euros raved about their occasional good vintage since the FDA wouldn't let our average wines be fed to our hogs (no doubt referring to the vin ordinaire that I had been slurping up).

At a Cave Junction reunion about ten years ago, I was amazed and pleased to sample Foris wines from Cave Junction. The winery had contributed several bottles of their Fly Over labeled wines for our reunion

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Smokejumper base abbreviations:

Anchorage..... ANC	Grangeville GAC	MissoulaMSO	ReddingRDD
Boise.....NIFC	Idaho City IDC	Redmond.....RAC	
Cave Junction CJ	La Grande..... LGD	West Yellowstone WYS	
Fairbanks FBX	McCall.....MYC	Winthrop..... NCSB	

barbecue. Foris makes Fly Over White and Fly Over Red, which are blended wines with the distinctive label of a single engine plane flying over some soaring evergreens. Folks at our reunion quickly drew in a parachute coming down to cement the fact that we saw the label as an homage to the old jumper base.

When I began to research the wine article, I got in touch with Ted Gerber, the founder of the Foris winery. He quickly disabused me of the notion that the Fly Over wines were an homage to the jumper base. He said he'd also heard folks say that the label was a tribute to the DEA marijuana planes that cruise the area, which was also wrong. Ted said the Fly Over label was intended to be a stick in the eye of the wine aficionados who thought that good wine ended at the Napa/ Sonoma area of California and didn't begin again until the Willamette Valley of Oregon; hence they simply 'flew over' the Siskiyou in transit between the two 'real' wine areas.

Ted said there was a true connection between Foris and the jumper base, but that connection was with the daily weather records which had been maintained at the jumper base (and before that the Cave Junction ranger station). The conventional thinking had been that the Siskiyou could not support successful vineyards because they were too hot in the summer and too cold in the winter. The Forest Service weather records convinced Ted that the conventional thinking was wrong.

Having disillusioned me about the jumper base connection with Foris, Ted said he and his brother, Jim, did indeed have a connection with Chuck Sheley. They had both been on Chico High School (California) track teams coached by Chuck! Ted and Jim had graduated from Chico in 1965 and 1968, respectively.

Jim went on to be a jumper at Redding while working his way through college, got a PhD, has written several books, and is now a consultant to several governments as well as an economics professor at San Diego State.

Ted graduated from Cal State Hayward in 1969. He said he then went to work in a factory where they made wine bottles and got involved in making wine at home. After just two years in this 'school of hard knocks', Ted resolved to make the wine industry his life's work and bought his first property at Cave Junction in 1971.

In the ensuing years he and his family bought an additional four plots of land. They now own 399 acres, of which 173 are planted in grapes. The original property is called the Gerber home ranch and is the site of the tasting room. It's a short drive up the

Oregon Caves Highway out of Cave Junction and easy to find.

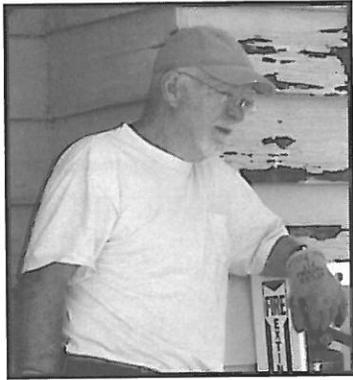
For the first ten years, Ted and his family sold their grapes to other vintners. Then in 1986 they began to produce their own wine under the Foris label. That was the same year that another winery, Bridgeview, began production in Cave Junction. Bridgeview is located in the same area as Foris' home vineyard and has a large production, including wines which catch your eye like a blue-bottled Blue Moon Reisling. Foris now has distributors in 40 states, and both Foris and Bridgeview have some international distribution.

In 2006, Bryan Wilson joined Foris as their winemaker. Bryan has a distinguished background, including working for the legendary Warren Winiarski at Stags Leap Vineyard in Napa. Winiarski is the man who, as much as anyone, put US wines on the international map by making the 1973 Cabernet Sauvignon wine that won the 1976 Judgement of Paris I earlier cited. Bryan and Ted describe their wines style as 'elegant', which they define as trying to highlight the fruit that they work so hard to grow while not messing it up with too much tinkering.

Oregon's wine industry is still growing, with some 400 wineries now when there were only 13 when Ted Gerber started Foris. In my humble opinion, Foris produces some of the best wine values to be found. Their Fly Over label blends are an excellent accompaniment to meals, and their Maple Ranch pinot noir is as good an American style pinot noir as I have found, at half the price of more touted wineries.

A Wall Street Journal review in 2006 said Foris' pinot noir was the best buy in Oregon. I asked Ted how they could stay alive in such a competitive industry. He quoted one wine writer who had visited their facility as saying they were "...short on glitz, but worth the trip." He said the wealthy folks who get into the wine business for the romance of it rather than profit are indeed hard to compete with, and added that he and other vintners who make a living in the business say there's no romance in wine until it's in the glass. Foris doesn't put their money into big tasting rooms and grounds; they invest in the land and the quality of the product.

There are now three generations of the Gerber family working in the Foris winery, and Ted's vision for the future is continued success. Having enjoyed their wines since my discovery of them about ten years ago, I certainly hope so. I urge *Smokejumper* readers to give them a try at one of your local wine dealers or via the internet at Foris' web site. And maybe one day they will do a label that is a true homage to the old Cave Junction jumper base. 🍷



Wes Brown (CJ-66)



Troop Emonds (CJ-66)



Terry Egan (CJ-65)



Gobi Restoration Project 2010

Photo's Courtesy Roger Brandt



Restoration Crew



Chris Matthews



Sue Williams



Harold Hartman (CJ-65)



Mike Hardy (MYC-75)



Jim Lancaster (MYC-62)



Tom Hunnicutt (RDD-78)

Layout Design: Johnny Kirkley (CJ-64)

More photos on page 28

Incident Over Elk City

by Ted Nyquist (Missoula '54)

In Grangeville, Idaho, Sept. 9, 1963 at the smoke-jumper base, foreman Tom Uphill readied the eight-man jumper request and map case for the Trilby Lakes Fire. The smokejumper base, referred to as the "loft," consisted of sleeping barracks for 16 jumpers, a small dispatch office, parachute loft, and gear storage, all in a small, white frame building at the airport.

Ford Trimotor NC7861 was parked within yards of the front door. Tom speculated that the fire had smoldered among the high rocks and sparse fuels at length before flaring up. Trilby Lakes is located high in the Sabe Creek drainage of the Nez Perce National Forest and the creek flows about 10 miles south into the Salmon River.

The first eight jumpers – Dave Bennett (MSO-61), Tom Schroeder (MSO-60), Dave Lancaster (MSO-63), John Scott (MSO-63), Barry Robinson (MSO-61), Richard McElroy (MSO-62), Dave Hess (MSO-63) and Bill Locklear (MSO-63) – were assigned from the rotating jump list and immediately began to suit up. I was to be the spotter and so I studied the large, mosaic wall map in the office, then began to assist the jumpers in attaching their main and emergency parachute packs.

Pilot Frank Borgeson started up the No. 1 and No. 2 engines of the Ford, and after we entered, he fired the No. 3 right engine next to the fuselage doorway. This was a process of activating the electric starter motor, which wound up with a high-pitched whine, finally reaching momentum to engage and start the engine. It was always accompanied by 10 seconds of hacking and irregular firing, a swirl of pungent, white exhaust smoke, mixed with the smell of raw gas.

Shortly, we began rolling down the taxiway. The Ford Trimotor, like most tail-draggers, was rather awkward on the ground with the fuselage at a steep, uncomfortable angle. Further, a stifling runway heat built up for jumpers in full gear.

Reaching the end of the runway, Frank ran through a short preflight check and taxied into takeoff position. He grasped the brake handle with his right hand and then put his left forearm over the control wheel, drawing it back while extending his left hand to thrust full throttle. The tail bobbed slightly when we surged forward, and the engines created a great roaring, vibrating, unsynchronous beat of noise.



Barry Robinson with prop. (Courtesy T. Nyquist)

I checked my watch and recorded takeoff time at 1415 hours (2:15 p.m.) in my pocket diary, aware of our efforts to reduce elapsed time from fire request to takeoff. The tail came up, leveling the fuselage; then we lifted off with a cooler breeze quickly improving the comfort level as helmets came off.

The Ford Trimotor was a slow, lumbering, huge-winged, corrugated metal beast dubbed "The Tin Goose." Normal cruise speed was close to 100 mph. The sound in flight was utterly distinctive and immediately recognized by every jumper within earshot.

I glanced back from the co-pilot's seat to see the tidy patchwork of yellow and green Camas Prairie grain fields fading from view. Ahead lay the rugged, forested Nez Perce National Forest as we slowly gained altitude and crossed over the South Fork of the Clearwater River and headed directly toward Elk City, an old mining town.

One of the more difficult jobs of a spotter in those days was to always know your location. I felt increasingly confident in this due to accumulating experience and Frank's excellent knowledge of the area. As we approached the Elk City checkpoint, a slight turn to the south would put us in line with Trilby Lakes. Some of the jumpers were dozing while others watched the terrain.

Then, a sudden, abrupt, startling explosion shook the aircraft-

Then, a sudden, abrupt, startling explosion shook the aircraft, followed by a choking cloud of hay dust

dislodged from all the nooks and cracks of the fuselage. The dust had been deposited by transporting bailed hay into Moose Creek Wilderness Station. The cloud cleared itself quickly, and I noticed my left hand was bleeding from a piece of shrapnel up from the floor.

Our attention was captured immediately by a violent, noisy shaking of the entire aircraft, as if inside a jackhammer. It seemed to come from No. 3, the right-side engine, and as I glanced out the window, searching for some understanding of what was happening, I noticed the forward engine cowling coming loose, thrusting itself into the propeller with a shower of sparks.

This repeated itself several times as the whole engine slowly shook loose from its mountings and gradually arched downward, but remained retained to the wing. My alarm increased as I saw the exposed fuel line break, spraying fuel over the rear of the engine and into the slipstream.

Frank's full attention was focused on recovering control and trim of the aircraft. I shouted over the noise and motioned toward the severed fuel line. He reached behind me to a small valve while I turned for a quick look at the jumpers. They had abandoned all protocols of command and control, and I saw the last three jumpers exiting the doorway. A helmet rolled into their traffic and was kicked aside, but went out the door ahead of the last jumper.

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Bennett had witnessed several metal parts fly by the door. Scott heard someone shout, "We're going down! Get out! Get out!" Schroeder and Bennett assisted each other hooking up static lines, then began their exits.

Bennett's wild ride was not over as he glanced back to see the Ford gently bank to the north, with a trail of gas vapor spewing behind as he descended. He hung up in a tree briefly, but caught a foot strap on a dry limb, and swung around to hang upside-down as his parachute collapsed. He suddenly broke free, falling end over end, grasping for branches; then his parachute caught on limbs and he landed upright and safe.

Scott hung up, did a rope letdown, then placed an orange crepe "L" to signal "jumper okay." Lancaster and Schroeder left their helmets behind. Several of the jumpers found their gloves on top of their emergency parachute packs as they descended.

The spray of gas subsided; the engine folded further down, then completely wrenched itself free and fell away. I noticed the newly exposed sublayer of our right front tire. The propeller must have chopped the rubber off the tire. Apparently, the prop contact with the wheel was the final assault that broke the engine free.

I strode back to the overhead rack and took down my spotter's emergency parachute and buckled the snaps, then glanced back toward the cabin. Frank was looking directly at me, face ashen, eyes large, as he gave a commanding, imploring shout: "Move the gear back!"

My decision was automatic, instinctual, and took perhaps two seconds. The spotter pack came off and I pulled the twisted mass of static lines back inside the plane, moved some gear toward the rear and then jumped back into the co-pilot's right seat. The noise and vibration had ceased and Frank was frantically preparing for a landing at a small airstrip surrounded by a busy sawmill and log yard.

I seized the "air net" microphone, which was reserved for all aircraft operations throughout Region 1, and with deliberate composure said, "Grangeville Jump Base, this is Ford 61."

Foreman Uphill answered, "This is Grangeville Jump Base, hold one." I did not know that a weather forecast was being broadcast from the Nez Perce National Forest supervisor's office at the same time. I repeated the call, with no answer. I turned to the "Forest Net," a frequency used by all work stations and vehicles on the forest. "Mayday, Mayday, Mayday. This is Ford 61. We've lost an engine. All jumpers have bailed out. Will try to land at Elk City."

Frank was gauging his altitude and completing the first portion of a 270-degree turn for our one chance approach and landing at the log yard strip. After completing 180 degrees, I was amazed to see a Forest Service vehicle stopped, with the door open, and the driver running for the airstrip with the car fire extinguisher in hand. He had acted immediately after hearing us overhead and the Mayday transmission on his radio.

We came in low on the two remaining engines, just over the driver's head and barely cleared a barbed wire fence. We touched down to an immediate, violent bursting of the right tire, coasted very shortly, then ground-looped on top of the distorted, blown-out remnants of the right tire.

A momentary silence ensued; then Frank and I grabbed and shook each other by the shoulders in joy, just long enough to realize that danger and uncertainty were still hanging heavily in the tilting Trimotor. We ran out the door and stood staring from a short distance,

still grasping for some reason and understanding.

Our restraint was short-lived as we cautiously approached – then began intently inspecting – first the gaping, vacant hole where the missing engine had once been positioned, then a sharp, elongated 9-inch cut entering near the bottom of the fuselage just behind the cockpit seats.

On the opposite side of the fuselage, but higher up on the wall, another hole of the same dimensions showed evidence an object had exited. It subsequently hit the woven wire cables that control the tail, forming sharp V-shaped creases in the cable. Frank then came to the realization that a piece of the propeller had broken off and flown through the airplane with explosive force.

Further inspection revealed the piece had continued its rising angle to cut completely through the left wing, leaving a small indentation 1 inch long and half an inch deep in the wing fuel tank – but not enough to create a hole.

Locklear was the last jumper to exit the Trimotor and could see where we had landed, so steered his parachute very close to the landing site. Soon a mill yard employee and operator of a log transporting machine arrived to tell us his observations of seeing the plane's engine fall into a mud bank of the creek, creating an impressive crater near his machine.

The Nez Perce Forest supervisor, John Milodragovich, arrived en route to Grangeville, having seen the Ford and wondered why it had landed on the American River Sawmill airstrip. He found pieces of the Trimotor's engine on the road.

Gradually, the jumpers arrived at the airstrip with their gear. They inspected the plane, then Locklear stated that he had been sitting on the chain saw box, but moments before the explosion had moved in front of the box and leaned against it, inches from the prop fragment's path. This fortuitous move likely spared his life.

This fortuitous move likely spared his life.

A powerful elation and relief settled over us as we began to comprehend our good fortune. I place all due credit with Frank Borgeson for the skillful piloting of the disabled Trimotor under great duress.

We ate dinner in Elk City and had a warm summer night's ride back to Grangeville with time to ponder the hard-to-imagine twists of fate and fortune. Schroeder pulled out a rum-soaked Crook Cigar with some pomp and circumstance and said, "I smoke one of these when things are going my way." 🦋

Inside The Grand Canyon

by Roland Pera (Missoula '56)

On May 26, armed with a stuffed backpack, I boarded a plane headed for the sin city of Las Vegas. Not wishing to be corrupted in any way, I immediately rented a car and drove to Hurricane, Utah, about 30 miles from Zion National Park. Lodging here is much less expensive than staying in Springdale, which borders the park.

I have been in quite a few of the national parks, and I really think that Zion is my favorite. The towering, brightly colored peaks rise 3,000 feet perpendicularly and spectacularly out of Zion Canyon toward a blue sky. The mountains range in color from cream, to pink, to bright red. Three of the peaks that are near each other are named "Court of the Patriarchs," one being Abraham, and the other two are Isaac and Jacob.

One of the popular hikes in the park is "Angel's Landing." It is about a three-hour round-trip hike that rises about 1,500 vertical feet. The first two-thirds is a good

trail; however, the last part of the hike is not for the faint of heart as the trail traverses a very narrow ridge. There are chains to hold on to which actually makes it quite safe, but most of the people stop where the chains start. It's an interesting hike with a great view.

When in Zion be sure to drive a very scenic road that winds its way out of Zion Canyon, goes through a long tunnel and heads toward Bryce Canyon National Park.

If you have not been to Zion, put it on your bucket list. The park is only two and one-half hours from the city of transgression. The drive from Las Vegas to Zion passes through a very rugged canyon called the "Virgin River Canyon," so it is not a boring drive.

After a wonderful day in Zion I returned to Las Vegas and joined my traveling partner, J.B., of smokejumper ilk. J.B. and I trained together for the smokejumpers in 1956. I didn't talk to him much in those days since I couldn't understand his Mississippi accent. These days

about half of the accent is gone. He hails from San Antonio and Breckenridge, Colo.

Our hotel was very close to "The Strip." It was mid-afternoon and we hadn't had lunch. I opened my mouth and said, "There's the MGM Grand; I am guessing we can find something to eat there."

We found the coffee house, were seated and parsed the menu: hamburger, \$19.75; chicken club sandwich, \$18.50; etc. We quickly decided to go somewhere else.

Early the next morning 15 of us, or so, boarded a chartered bus for Lee's Ferry, Ariz., which is in Marble Canyon. This is designated as Mile Marker One on the Colorado River as it begins its journey through the Grand Canyon. From this point for a couple hundred miles downriver, it is impossible to drive to the river.

We arrived about noon and were greeted by seven guides from Arizona River Runners. We quickly noticed seven heavily loaded, oar-powered rubber rafts which would be our daytime homes on the water for the next five and one-half days. We changed clothes, went through a brief orientation and boarded the boats. Our 87-mile river journey had begun.

The guides sat in the center of the boat and were in complete charge of the rowing. Six of the rubber rafts carried passengers and cargo and one boat carried cargo only. We traveled for an hour, then pulled up to a sandy beach and had lunch. It was amazing how quickly the crew could set up a few tables, get sandwich stuff ready and make a salad. The food was always good.

The day was perfect and the scenery was spectacular. Around 5 p.m., our captain, Jimmi, who was in the lead boat, pulled up to a sandy beach which was to be our camp for the night. The passengers helped the guides unload the necessary items and soon the camp took shape. Needless to say, the guides are incredibly well-organized and efficient. While the crew worked on dinner, it was time for the guests to either make a stab at cleaning up in the river, find a sleeping place, or find the cold beer. The beer is chilled by the river, which is always cold. The water temperature is somewhere around 55 degrees. Our delicious dinner that night was salmon steak, rice, and broccoli.

What about the sleeping routine? The boats did carry tents, but we did not use them as the weather was warm and no rain was ever in sight. We all were furnished a piece of canvas to lay on the ground, a mat which served as a mattress, a sheet to put on the mat, a sleeping bag, and a pillow. The sand was soft, so the beds were reasonably comfortable. However, it was hard to keep the sand out of your bed.

The camping areas were large enough where we could spread out. I think everyone tried rather hard to find a "good place" to bed down. The first two nights there was

a glorious full moon visible to us. The other nights it was very dark in the canyons.

By 5:30 to 5:45 a.m., the crew was stirring and soon the loud announcement was given, "COFFEE'S READY!" The breakfasts were sumptuous – pancakes, eggs made to order, bacon, sausage, fruit, etc. Usually by 8 to 8:30 the camp had been taken down, the boats were loaded, and it would be time to hit the river.

In the morning most people wore their rain gear (with the exception of J.B., who did not bring any). Getting wet going through the rapids can be a cold activity in the morning. By late morning and in the afternoon, most of us took the rain gear off and did not mind getting wet.

We were a party of 23 along with seven guides. Each boat had four persons plus the guides. Sitting in the front of the boat literally guaranteed getting wet when passing through the rapids, although being in the back certainly did not guarantee one from not getting wet. Sometimes the boats went through at least part of the rapids going backward.

How did the rafting company keep things such as the bedding dry? Everyone was provided with two good-sized waterproof bags, one for our bedding and one for the bulk of our items. In addition, everyone was also furnished a smaller waterproof bag, which was our day bag. This bag housed anything we might need on that day, such as suntan lotion, etc. It was important that all the bags were always secured in the boats.

I had some major misconceptions about the river. One, I was surprised how the river was very still, very lazy, appearing much like a lake in many places. The next one was that it was much deeper than I expected. One book said that it was as deep as 90 feet in places, although most of the time 10 or 20 feet was a rough average.

I had seen so many pictures of the river being muddy. This was certainly not the case on this trip as the water was green and quite clean.

More on running the rapids – I will guess that we went through at least 50 rapids on our 87-mile journey, some obviously more wild than others. The unique thing about the rapids is that you can hear them before you can see them.

Before entering the turbulent water, the guide warns everyone to make sure they are sitting and holding on. Upon hitting the rapids, there is a lot of yelling, the boat gets pitched wildly about, and almost everyone gets wet. Usually it takes less than a minute to get through the worst part of each rapids. Very exhilarating!

We were told all along that the "big one," the Hance Rapids, would come on the last day. There was a place to beach the boats, climb a hundred feet and scout the rapids, which we did. It was quite an impressive sight.

The crew planned their navigation strategy from

that observation point. I do wonder a little bit if they purposely stopped to make the whole episode even more dramatic. The irony was that the Hance Rapids were scary, but we went through a wilder one about a half-hour later.

Is it boring to ride in the boat all day long? I suppose at times it gets a little tedious, but every turn and twist in the river presents a new vista, a different rock formation, etc. Watching for bighorn sheep and Merganser ducks also presents a diversion.

The guides seem to pride themselves in geologically explaining all of the rock formations. In some places the canyon is rather wide and in some places it is narrow. For the first three days most of the bluffs were flat on the top. By the last day we were in the gorge where the rock rose in all sorts of shapes.

The difference between a gorge and canyon is thus: a canyon is wider than it is deep and a gorge is deeper than it is wide.

Also to give us some exercise, and possibly to avoid

boredom, we did go on a hike almost every day – including one where we climbed about 700 feet and ended at a pool hidden between some large boulders. Also in the area of relieving boredom, there were many water fights among the boats. Twelve-year-old Austin was the main perpetrator.

I already mentioned the quality of the food. The second night we had pork chops, the third night was chicken cordon-bleu, the fourth was beef over rice, and the last night was steak. In addition there was usually a dessert baked in a Dutch oven over coals. Kudos to the crew!

A word about the guides: there were three gals and four guys. Jimmi, who was the trip captain, was almost 60, while Chelsea, the youngest, was in her mid-20s. One of the guys was 43 and one of the gals was also in her 40s.

“Free-spirited” would probably be the best way to characterize these people. They are college-educated, fun-loving, love the outdoors, and love the river much like the ski bums love the snow-covered mountains. They



NSA Trail Project Members Improve Portage in The Boundary Waters Canoe Wilderness Area. L-R: Chuck Sheley (CJ-59), Wes Schroeder (MYC-61), Mark Schroeder (Assoc.), Don Havel (FBX-66), Jim Cherry (MSO-57), Ron Thoreson (CJ-60). (Courtesy J. Cherry)

certainly are not in it for the money. It is obviously very difficult to break away from this life.

Who goes on a trip like this? There were Steve and Geri and two teenage boys from Milwaukee; Ben, in his 70s, from Florida; Gary from Tucson, and nephew Austin (the water fight guy) and son, Matt, in his 20s, from New York; David and two grown sons from Globe, Ariz.; Sam and Becca, father and 29-year-old daughter, from Calgary; Jacek, in his 60s, from Florida (funny guy, grew up in Poland, dressed like a Greek merchant); Ernest, in his mid-70s, from Sitka, Alaska, and his pilot son, Eric; Danny, hardware store owner, 50s, from Washington state; Herb and Becky, 50s, from Hershey, Pa. (he is a classical musician and she is a physician – I had many organ/Bach, etc. conversations with him); Dave and Tina, 40s, outdoorsy couple from Redding, Calif.; and, of course, J.B., and the writer.

To go on a trip like this, it is necessary to rough it a bit. On a couple of windy days, the sand would grind on your teeth. The bathroom part is challenging and amusing. Modesty is not a virtue on a Grand Canyon rafting trip. 'nuff said. The upside is good company, great food, awesome scenery, and little bit of living on the edge.

As I wrote, there were 23 guests on the trip. Thirteen of us were scheduled to walk out to the South Rim and 13 people would be walking down to do the second half of the trip with the remaining 10 people.

We rose a little earlier than usual the morning of Thursday, June 3, and prepared for the walkout on the Bright Angel Trail. We camped a few miles from the drop-off point, and two boats were dispatched to take all the hikers to the beginning point. J.B. and I eventually got our stuff together and hit the road about 7:45, carrying about 25 pounds apiece.

A word or two about the Bright Angel Trail: the trail is the most traveled one in the canyon. It is probably most famous for the mule rides to the Phantom Ranch and back to the rim. The ranch is a place to stay, sleep, and eat, a third of a mile north of the river – to stay there you need reservations years in advance.

The distance from the Phantom Ranch to the rim is about 10 miles. Our river people got us a little closer so our distance was almost eight miles with a vertical climb of 4,600 feet.

The history of the trail suggests that the Indians used it for hundreds of years, and the first white settlers used it as early as the late 1800s. Fortunately there are three places where water is available; otherwise, given the heat, we would have probably had to pack an extra gallon of water (another eight pounds).

The trail is a good, wide trail in most places. The traffic on the Bright Angel is very heavy. The uphill climb is relentless – dumb comment; what else can you expect

when you have 4,600 feet to gain?

The heat of the summer only adds to the difficulty of the hike. The temperatures of Phoenix and Las Vegas are generally proxies for the bottom of the canyon. Gaining the 4,600 vertical feet does help with the heat. We were lucky – the high temperature on our hike-out day in Phoenix was 93; on the next day the high was 103, and two days later it was 108.

This writer held in pretty well, but certainly did not set any records. The last mile and one-half was pretty torturous. Nevertheless, I stumbled across the finish line about 2:20. The first thing I did was to find the Bright Angel Lodge Lounge where I drank a huge draft of beer and four cups of iced water.

After all the warnings from our river people to drink copious amounts of water, after all the warning signs on the trail, and all of the warnings I have read over the years, it was obvious that I still did not drink nearly enough.

From there it was spending the night in Tusayan (little town by the South Rim), flying the next day to Las Vegas on Vision Air (bet you've never heard of it), spending Friday night in Las Vegas, and home on Saturday just in time to be whisked to granddaughter Allison's dance recital. ♣

The Story Behind The Cover Photo

by Mark Corbet (LGD-74)

The cover photo of two FS-10 parachutes hanging over Hells Canyon was taken as the first of ten La Grande Smokejumpers headed to the Steamboat Creek fire on the Wallowa-Whitman National Forest June 28, 1976. Mark Lewis (LGD-75) took the shot.

The two jumpers in the picture are Kurt Werst (LGD-74) and Chuck Kase (LGD-74). The view is looking north with Idaho on the right and Oregon on the left. The fire was about two acres in size and burning in a small patch of ponderosa pine. All ten landed with no problems in a nearly level patch of open grass, just below the fire and 2400 feet above the river. Twenty-four hours later, with the fire contained and mop up nearly complete, the jumpers were flown off the fire by helicopter and a helitack crew took over.

Jumpers on this fire were Kurt Werst, Chuck Kase, Mark Lewis, Ted Taylor (RAC-75), Jerry Williams (RAC -72), Mike Henbest (LGD -74), Rick Barnes (LGD -74), Mark Corbet (LGD -74), Ken Watson (LGD -74) and Howard Cooper (RAC -73). ♣

For Jerry Dixon, The Dancing Never Stopped

by Doug Abromeit (McCall '71)

I first laid eyes on Jerry Dixon (MYC-71) in 1971. I was in McCall smokejumper rookie training, lying face-down in the dirt with sweat rolling off my forehead and into my eyes with Neil Satterwhite (MYC-65) standing above me, yelling: “Okay, Puke, now give me 25 more.”

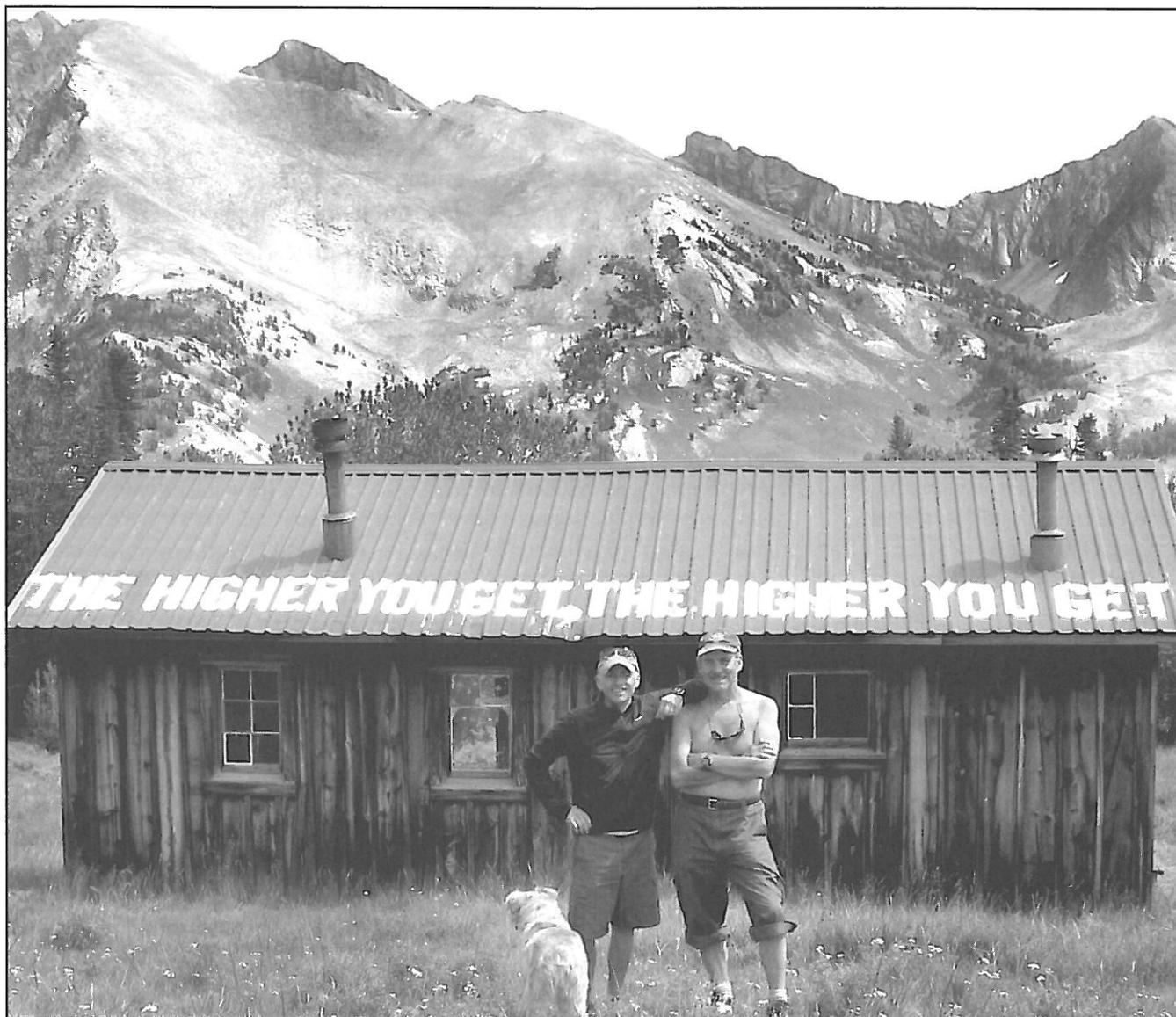
Satterwhite, of course, was referring to push-ups.

I was trying to summon the juice to do exactly as I was told because Satterwhite – who could do 20 one-armed push-ups and spoke with a gravelly growl that emitted

from his throat at the same point a Viet Cong shell had ripped away his larynx – was undoubtedly the toughest human being I had run across in my sheltered life.

That’s when Dixon appeared. I looked up and saw this guy running across the field toward Del Catlin (MYC-47), the base manager.

I looked back down and grunted out 25 shaky, half-assed push-ups for Satterwhite and staggered to my feet. By that time Dixon was gone and I forgot about him. But the next morning there he was again, standing with



L-R: Doug Abromeit and Jerry Dixon August 2009 Pioneer Cabin near Ketchum, Idaho. (Courtesy D. Abromeit)

the rest of us rookies waiting for the trainers to emerge from the loft.

We asked who he was. He said his name was Dixon and that he had been working in Council on the district fire crew and happened to be driving by when he saw us training. He said he stopped his pickup, ran over to Catlin and told him he had always wanted to be a smokejumper and could he join the group. "Be here tomorrow," The Cat told him.

He said he stopped his pickup, ran over to Catlin and told him he had always wanted to be a smokejumper and could he join the group.

When the trainers came out, they introduced Dixon and noted that since half our class had been a bunch of wussies and had washed out, they were now forced to take Dixon on. They further noted that while the rest of us were, for the most part, worthless and had learned precious little, we had been at it for a week and Dixon would have to suck it up and catch up.

And Dixon's catching up was the best thing that could have happened to the rest of us. Much of the trainers' attention switched to Dixon and away from the rest of us. The trainers took turns having him do Allen rolls out of a moving, bouncing pickup, followed by push-ups; exits off the jump tower, followed by push-ups; and letdowns, followed by push-ups.

I remember Dixon being so tired he would drag himself into the cafeteria and eat, and then stagger up to the barracks and sleep. We called him Mattress Back and marveled that he didn't quit.

And he didn't; he was back every morning with his cocky "Cool Hand Luke" swagger ready to take everything that was thrown his way. At the end of the training sufferfest, the trainers, all of whom secretly admired Dixon's verve, announced he would be allowed to join the rest of us and make the seven practice jumps required to be a smokejumper.

The fifth or sixth practice jump was the packout jump. We jumped, and then the spotters dropped cargo that we gathered along with our jump suits, stuffed it all into huge, thick canvas sacks that resembled feedbags for giant horses.

The bags were unwieldy, uncomfortable, bulbous and heavy. Our task was to put these monstrosities on our backs and carry them five tortuous miles back to the jump base in one hour; the trainers, of course, slipped rocks into everyone's bag.

I had been dreading the packout. At 125 pounds, carrying a 110-pound pack sounded next to impossible. Dixon told me: "Hey, don't worry, pal. I'll be there."

And he was. Dixon helped me get the bag on my back and told me I looked like an ant carrying a beetle. Dixon and I were last in line, but I was doing okay until the

trail narrowed as it traversed a steep, rocky slope with a creek at the bottom of it. I slipped off the trail, and the overloaded cylindrical giant and I rolled downslope – thump, thump, thump.

The bag and I finally stopped at the edge of the creek. I was lacerated and had talus-shaped indentations all over my arms and face. I hurt everywhere and figured I was totally screwed.

But then, all of a sudden, there was Dixon saying: "Get your ass up, Abro. We gotta get going."

"Get your ass up, Abro. We gotta get going."

We dragged the bag up the bank, got it onto my back, and off we went. When we got near the finish line at the jump base all our rookie buddies were there and cheering. The trainers were yelling, "You slugs have two minutes to make it." Dixon and I started running – or at least trying to run – and we made it with thirty seconds to spare.

Dixon and I remained very close friends right to the end; we jumped together for several more years, skied in Alaska and Alta too many times to remember, sea kayaked in the Kenai Fjords, rowed the Grand Canyon, and, best of all, told the same stories over and over again and laughed a lot. During those 40 years, Dixon told me repeatedly that the greatest gifts a human can have are good friends and a loving family.

And Jerry had both, but unfortunately neither his many friends nor his loving family could stave off the ravages of ALS – amyotrophic lateral sclerosis, or Lou Gehrig's Disease.

And now he's gone, and I'll miss Jerry calling from Alaska, waking me up at 1 o'clock in the morning and yelling: "Abromeit, both feet on the deck. We jump at dawn." Then telling me about some new adventure he had hatched up, like dicing some un-skied line in the Chugach.

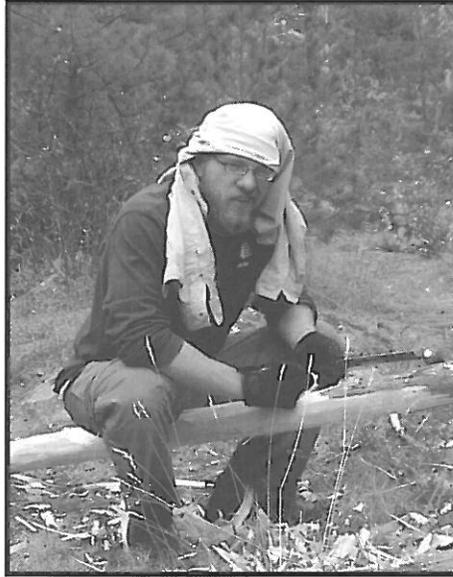
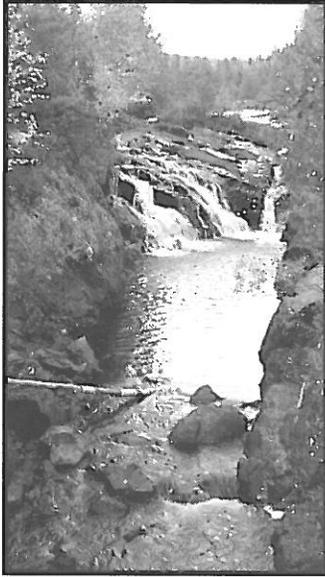
That's the spirit that drove Jerry right to the end. During his last six months – despite precipitous physical decline – Jerry climbed Mount Kilimanjaro in February and then, after his local guide told him that his tribe had a proverb that said a man should never stop dancing, he was the only white guy who danced in a Kenyan ceremony at the foot of the mountain.

He skied several days at Sun Valley in April, floated the Grand Canyon in July in 120-degree heat, and drove solo up the Alaska-Canadian Highway in August. I talked to Jerry a few days before he died, and he told me,

Teaser Insert: "remember, pal, never stop dancing."

"Abro, I've had a life blessed with a loving family and great friends, and Janet and you are two of them. I wish you all the best for all time and remember, pal, never stop dancing."

All the best to you, Jerry; we all know you'll never stop dancing. 🙏



Will Tanner (Associate)



Tom Carlsen (MSO-70)



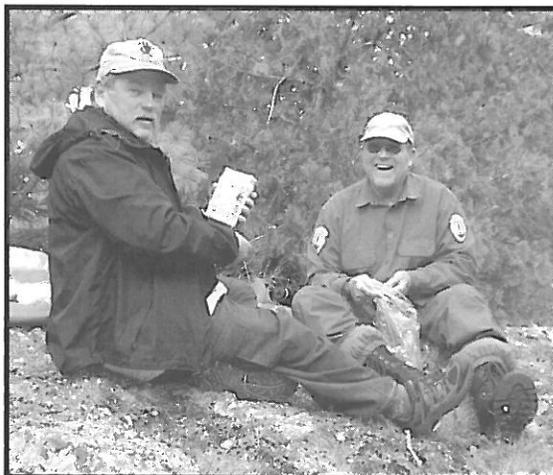
Minnesota Trail Project 2010

Boundary Waters Wilderness Canoe Area

Photo's Courtesy Ron Baylor (MSO-58)



Will Tanner (Associate)



Tom Carlsen (MSO-70) & Scott Belknap (MYC-83)



Tom Carlsen (MSO-70)

The View from Outside the Fence



by Chris Sorensen
(Associate)

GAYLE MORRISON'S (ASSOCIATE) long anticipated book on Jerry "Hog" Daniels (MSO-58) is scheduled to be published in April of 2012 by the Texas Tech University Press. The title is "Hog's Exit." Gayle has been working on Jerry's story for a very long time, and she tells me that much work remains to be completed before the book goes to print.

I have always lamented the fact that there is no Ford Trimotor on Display in Missoula. A check of the Museum of Mountain Flying's web site <http://museummountainflying.org/>, (click on projects), reveals that one of the museum's projects is retrieving the Johnson Flying Service Ford Trimotor NC435H from the Big Prairie landing strip deep inside the Bob Marshall Wilderness. This Trimotor was the newest Ford that Johnson Flying Service ever owned and was the first Trimotor that was wrecked by the Johnson Flying Service. The plane was a 5 AT D

and carried serial number 102. Dick Johnson was at the controls, during the 1938 accident, and walked away with a bump on the head. The engines and other parts were salvaged by Johnson after the accident. All that remains are the wing and fuselage, and it appears the fuselage is in two pieces. It will be a monumental task to get the plane out of the wilderness area and an even greater monumental task to restore it.

Rod Benson, an earth science teacher at Helena High School, has produced a virtual tour of Mann Gulch. The web site is: <http://formontana.net/gulch.html>. The photography is excellent and the web site is the kind of quality I would expect from someone trained in the sciences. Included is an audio interview with **Bob Sallee** (MSO-49). Take a look at Rod's web site. You won't be disappointed.

Federal Judge Donald Malloy of Missoula announced in December that he was taking Senior Status (semi-retirement). Judge Malloy has presided over dozens of controversial cases over the years, including the case requiring the Forest Service to complete an Environmental Impact Statement on air tanker operations and retardant. Judge Malloy warned

the Forest Service that "The Federal Defendants are advised that failure to comply with this deadline may subject them to sanctions, including contempt proceedings, and could conceivably result in enjoining the continued use of aerially applied fire retardant until the law enacted by Congress is complied with." This is the no-nonsense Judge who ordered former Undersecretary of Agriculture Mark Rey to appear in Court in Missoula to answer contempt of court charges and threatened him with house arrest and electronic monitoring for his failure to comply with Malloy's earlier rulings in a 2003 retardant lawsuit. Whoever replaces Judge Malloy better have a lot of stamina.

If you haven't looked at the North Cascades Smokejumper Base web site, it's well worth your time. The site is packed with photos, movies, slide shows and historical documents. Point your browser to: <http://www.ncsb-smokejumpers.com>.

This column is dedicated to Major General Vang Pao of the Royal Lao Army and **Jedidiah Lusk** (FBX-10) who both left us in early January to take their respective places in smokejumper history. 🙏

Please Tell Us When You Change Your Address

The postal service does *NOT* forward your copy of *Smokejumper* when you move or leave home for an extended time period. It is returned to us and the NSA is charged an additional first class postage fee. With 30-40 returns per mailing it gets expensive and takes a lot of time. Please let Chuck Sheley know if you have any change in your mailing address. His contact information is on page three.

through burning forest floor. Fortunately, fires kind of “go to sleep” at night and we got away with it.

When we were up on the side of the mountain above the lake fighting the fire, we had a grandstand seat of the action from the TBM retardant bombers. They would fly across the lake, make several circles in the box canyon, and come back just above the lake and pull up in a climb to make their drop.

I wished I had a color movie camera because I still have the images of looking down on the black-and-red plane, the green forest, blue lake, and pink retardant

– it was wonderful. I had debated whether to purchase a camera before I joined the jumpers. This pushed me over the edge.

I was asked to man the radio that communicated with the retardant bombers for a few minutes, with the statement that they didn’t expect to have any flying over while I was there.

Well, one showed up and asked where we wanted him to drop his load. At the time all I could manage to say was: “On the fire.” When the radio boss got back, he looked over and saw a spot fire outside the fireline and wanted to

know why the retardant was not dropped on it. That was the last time I manned the radio.

When we left the fire, we hiked with a 60-year-old forest ranger. He had a walking stick and a pack with a bell attached. After a couple of hours of listening to the “ding, ding, ding,” someone asked what he had that stupid bell for.

His reply: “If the grizzly bears hear you coming, they move out of the way.” We got the message. 🐻

Jack can be contacted at 1233 E Krista Way, Tempe, AZ 85284 or ajrowse@msn.com.



A good group of ex-jumpers worked at the Redding Air Attack Base during the 2010 fire season. Their current employer is also listed. L-R: Dan Emry (BOI-78) Phos-Chek, Tim “Dog” Huntington (RDD-77) Phos-Chek, Scott Brockman (RDD-83) Capt. Cal-Fire, Ken Perkins (RDD-77) USFS, Charlie Caldwell (RDD-65) Phos-Chek, Bob Coward (SJ Pilot) Dyncorp, Norm “Bake” Baker (RDD-81) USFS Capt. (Courtesy T. Huntington)

- Malignant giant cell tumor of the tendon sheath
- Malignant glandular schwannoma
- Malignant glomus tumor
- Malignant hemangiopericytoma
- Malignant mesenchymoma
- Malignant ganglioneuroma
- Malignant granular cell tumor
- Malignant leiomyoblastoma
- Malignant synovioma
- Malignant schwannoma with rhabdomyoblastic differentiation
- Proliferating (systemic) angioendotheliomatosis
- Rhabdomyosarcoma
- Synovial sarcoma

Disabilities in the Children of Herbicide-Exposed Veterans

- Spina bifida (except spina bifida occulta)

Examples of Certain Birth Defects in the Children of Female Vietnam Veterans

- Cleft lip and cleft palate
- Congenital heart disease
- Congenital talipes equinovarus (club foot)
- Esophageal and intestinal atresia
- Hallerman-Streiff syndrome

- Hip dysplasia
- Hirschprung's disease (congenital megacolon)
- Hydrocephalus due to aqueductal stenosis
- Hypospadias
- Imperforate anus
- Neural tube defects (including spina bifida, encephalocele and anencephaly)
- Poland syndrome
- Pyloric stenosis
- Syndactyly (fused digets)
- Tracheoesophageal fistula
- Undescended testicle
- Williams' syndrome

For a full list of the diseases that may qualify a Vietnam veteran (or that veteran's spouse or widow) for disability compensation and VA health care, go to publichealth.va.gov/exposures/agentorange/diseases.asp.

Further, thousands of veterans who served in Korea from April 1968 through July 1969 may have been exposed to the same types of toxic defoliants used in Vietnam. They may also qualify for disability compensation.

For assistance in enrolling in the VA system, contact a county Veterans Service Officer or a VSO at the nearest post of the Veterans of Foreign Wars, American Legion or Disabled American Veterans. 🇺🇸

Rookie Finds He Has The Stomach For Jumping

by Jack Rowse (Missoula '62)

My first fire was on the side of upper Kintla Lake in Glacier National Park, July 20, 1962. The lake is located in a horseshoe-shaped canyon with the lake level at 4,373 feet. There were 44 jumpers on the fire.

We were jumping out of the DC-2, and the pilot was flying below the ridge tops making circles within the box canyon. We jumped two men on every pass. This meant we were doing a lot of flying in circles, and with the seats out of the DC-2 and us sitting on the floor, all we could see out of the windows was the sky.

I proceeded to get very airsick – I mean VERY airsick. The thought of jumping did not bother me. I just wanted to get out of that airplane with or without a parachute.

There is a rule about jumping that the first-year jumpers always jump second or third, never first. This is because the first man out the door can step out with his right leg first. This turns him counter-clockwise and makes for a very easy opening of the parachute. If the next man out doesn't manage to get his right leg first out the door, he can get jerked around on opening.

I was teamed up with a crusty/

cranky second-year man who did not have much use for me, or anyone else for that matter. I asked him if I could go first on the jump.

His reply: "You know the rules. Second-year men go first," to which I replied, "Well, then, I guess I will just have to throw up on your back." It really is a lot easier to be first out the door.

As luck would have it, I was on a two-man fire with him later; that's another story.

I have several memories of working the fire. We were carrying two five-gallon cans of chain saw gas at night and were walking