
THE ENEMY WITHIN: LASSITUDE AND INEPTITUDE IN THE U.S. FOREST SERVICE

by Les Joslin-Editor OldSmokeys Newsletter

Between 1962, when I first worked in the U.S. Forest Service, and 2005, when I resigned from the Forest Service – during the late 1960s to late 1980s while I served as a naval officer – the Forest Service changed profoundly.

It changed from a small, poorly-funded, “can do” outfit to a bloated, poorly-funded, “won’t do” outfit. It changed from an outfit of people who prided themselves on accomplishing work in the field to an outfit of people who settle for collaborating and computing in the office. It changed from an outfit that knew what it was about to an outfit that doesn’t care what it’s about.

I think the Forest Service has become what it has become, because it has changed from a constructive and cooperative command-and-control culture, in which the district ranger was captain of his ship, to a confused and counterproductive collaborative-and-cajole culture, in which the inmates run the insane asylum.

Good leaders and those who would be good leaders grew up and thrived in the former culture, but are driven from the current culture. And – with notable exceptions – the outfit is left with those who can’t and won’t. It’s been that way so long that hardly anyone remains to recall the days the outfit could and did, and almost everyone perceives the current malaise as normal.

This enemy within – this syndrome of lassitude and ineptitude to which the state of the National Forest System and the Forest Service bear witness – represents a clear and present danger to the National Forest System the Forest Service was established to manage for the citizens of the United States and their posterity.

This clear and present danger represents the most significant challenge to those who would lead.

Yet, those who would lead and should lead won’t lead.

And the enemy within advances.

That’s heartbreaking. ¶

Even Nature Can’t Force These Jumpers To Quit

With 1,730 jumps between them, **Walt Wasser** (MYC-79) and **Dale Longanecker** (RAC-74) have demonstrated an “iron man” character that’s remarkable, even by smokejumping standards.

Mother Nature couldn’t force out these guys, each of whom is 57. It took a different kind of power to ground them – the U.S. Forest Service and BLM, which mandates retirement at this age without regard for one’s physical condition or ability.

Each leads in a different category of total jumps made. Wasser has the edge in fire jumps with 395, compared to Longanecker’s 362. Longanecker holds the standard for total jumps with 896, over Wasser’s 834.

Wasser – who goes by “Wally” – started in McCall and jumped there his first eight years before joining the Boise BLM in 1987. He also has at least five fire jumps in each of his 33 years in smokejumping – including 24 in his best year, 1994 – and has notched more than 2,700 sport jumps.

Longanecker began at age 19 in Redmond, jumping there through the 1976 season before transferring to North Cascades, close to his boyhood home of the Methow Valley in north-central Washington.

His older brothers, **Dean** (NCSB-68) and **Ernie**, (NCSB-70) jumped for six and five years, respectively, before moving on to other pursuits. ¶

Get Your Smokejumper Magazine Electronically

NSA President **John Twiss** (RAC-67) has suggested that we look at the possibility of sending *Smokejumper* magazine via email in a format that can be downloaded and printed from your home computer. If you are interested in receiving your magazine via the internet, please drop me an email: cnkgsheley@earthlink.net



A Meeting of Old Smokejumpers in Spokane June 2011 L-R: Johnny Kirkley (CJ-64), Bob Sallee (MSO-49), Charley Moseley (CJ-62), T.J. Thompson (MSO-55), Ted Putnam (MSO-66).

Staying Connected Thanks To Old Memories

by LeRoy Cook (Cave Junction '64)

She doesn't run like she used to but she accesses time like no other, 61 years young. I guess you could say she's a time traveler. For reasons known only to me, I like to sit in her and smell her or hang my arm out the window as she takes me for short adventures.

Sometimes we go to the ice cream parlor or just around the block for some fresh air or to visit a friend; when Naurine comes, she sits a little closer like she did when we first dated.

It's my way of remembering another time in this short and fragile life; ancient memories near and gone when living was simpler, and we all lived closer to the land.

Some things are triggers that transport us to our lion days. Without thinking they pull the trigger, stalling our brains on marooned, shipwrecked memories.

I stay away from Fourth of July celebrations. Fireworks transport me quickly back to Southeast Asia. I hate it; best to go fishing on the Fourth. Old cars – or for that matter, such things as old bamboo fishing rods and paper shotgun shells – connect old men to their youth, a time when living was different.

Little things can create such powerful memories; instant transgressions. The mild odor of a road-killed skunk is my doorway back in time to rural Missouri. I like the smell.

If you've grown up on the land, many sights and sounds bring pleasant memories. The call of a faraway dove, the rustling of corn in the wind, or barn swallows circling, hawking insects in the evening's hazy glow.

We each have them. Pleasant memories! Memories that often represented effort, hard work, or something we loved to do. Yours may be spring's lingering scent

of purple lilac, shoo-fly pie, or the call of an owl on a moonless night.

I used to talk with Clint, my son, when he was young; we'd go outside and lie on the grass in the evening and watch the sky turn dark. The beagles (Troop and Jake) would join us, lying close to keep us warm on the cold ground. The moon's jeweled light would push back the night as clouds slithered like ghosts in the fading light.

Sometimes the stars joined us; at times we'd even have meaningful conversations. I loved those talks. Now pocketknives have become pocket phones. Perhaps a good thing, but modern living – like modern farming – can at times be not as close, upfront and personal.

As in my youth, young people need to have a sense of place and a way to connect to Earth's tawny breast.

The world is always changing; most of us now must live in cities. Today's rituals and rhythms belong to our everyday world, flashes of time connecting the swiftness, abruptness and profusion of modern life. Some live as close to electronic impulses as they do the tempo of the seasons.

We are disconnecting with the land. Small farms were once the backbone of America, farmed by lean, lantern-jawed men who talked straight and shaved once a week; their bib overalls with a smudge of country. More than ever we should not forget those who guided us down our pathway. Seeds of goodness and love were sown all across America.

Older folks don't change as fast as those younger, and with today's fast pace, much of society now seems so divided and less understanding. Perhaps this is why it seems harder to keep family and friends connected.

Forgive me; I must work harder at embracing change. It's not my fault; sometimes I can't help myself. Friends, relationships and connecting are intensely personal.

The strongest is Love. Connection equals participation. The way to connect is to get out on the land and do things together.

Talks are easier outside! A place where life is easily understood and living growing things hold fast, rattle, and make noise in the wind.

Besides, life needs a few rough edges, and if you are going to make men of boys, you must go deeper than intellect, teaching something else. You can't find dirt roads in the city. Dusty trails force you to slow down, look around, get out in the open air where the wind blows the stink of urban suet off.

I wish I had stayed closer to some in my past. Seasons and time never stop.

We all toss the dice in the privacy of our minds, and for those without a connection to someone else, winter can easily be a wall of isolation. After the holidays, the world will get on with its affairs. Contacts and acts of Love today will be someone's memories in their older, judgmental years.

Yes, Christmas is a good time to try to get closer, but it only comes once a year. I hope this next year will bring you many connections – places of memories or a memory of places ... good memories!

Merry Christmas! 🦋

New NSA Life Members

Since January 2011

Thanks for your support!

#	Name	Base	Year
251..	Bill Long.....	Cave Junction	....1955
252..	Dick Tracy	Missoula	.....1953
253..	Bob Kersh	Associate	.....
254..	Bob Smee.....	Missoula	.....1968
255..	Steve Anderson	Missoula	.....1963
256..	Lonnie Dale.....	Missoula	.....1969
257..	Gary Lawley.....	Missoula	.....1957
258..	Chauncey & Christy Taylor	associates	
259..	H.B. "Doc" Smith	Missoula	.....1959
260..	Brian Thomas Miller..	Redding	.....1985
261..	Gene Hamner	Missoula	.....1967
262..	Richard Andrews.....	Redding	.....1968
263..	Ashley Court.....	No Cascades	.....1963
264..	Ken Perkins.....	Redding	.....1977

Touching All Bases

Redmond Base Report

by Josh Voshall (Redding '03)

As of Sept. 23, 2011, the Redmond Smokejumpers have jumped a total of 50 fires for 261 fire jumps.

The dry spell ended on Aug. 3, 2011, with a load of 10 jumpers out of the door, making it the latest start in Redmond history. Our next round of fire season started again on Aug. 24, 2011, in the region with 48 fires and 247 fire jumps made. During that time, we had North Cascades, Redding and the Alaska Smokejumpers boosting here to help out. To those bases, thanks a bunch for the help, both in the field and rehabbing at the base.

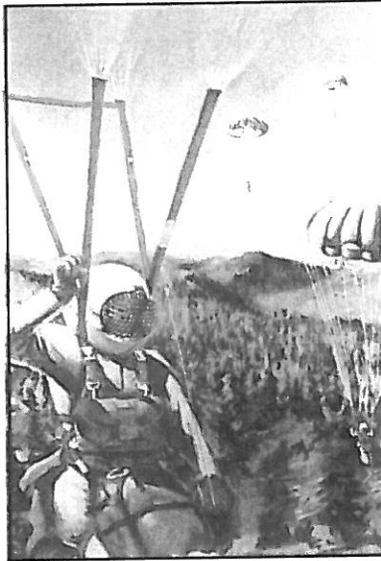
Earlier in the season, we said goodbye to **Mark Gibbons** (RAC-87). When Big Ernie made jumpers, he made Mark harder than steel. He was a great asset to the Redmond program, full of knowledge and great abilities, especially to teach newer jumpers the ropes. If you know Mark or knew of him, you know that he loves being outdoors and being with the "Bros" every chance he gets. Thanks again, Mark, for your insight and showin' us the ropes!

During the beginning of the season we boosted eight jumpers to Alaska for three weeks. Also during this time four climbers detailed to Worcester, Mass., for three weeks in search of the infamous Asian Longhorned Beetle. Both groups had good times and positive experiences, except for a little poison ivy in Massachusetts.

With the slow start to fire season and early season proficiency jumps to do, **Marcel "30 plus Doughnuts" Potvin** (RAC-07) thought it would be a great idea to eat as many doughnuts as he could while keeping a tally up on the ops board downstairs in the ready room.

The history behind it goes something like this. Since we provide doughnuts at the jump spot, some jumpers who are watching their jump weight chose to pass on these delicious, deep-fried doughy morsels. The leftover doughnuts are brought back to the base to feast on by those who have just PT'd.

So, since it was the shortest and possibly the worst



fire season ever, Marcel had this grand idea that every time there were doughnuts brought back from the jump spot, he would have at least one or possibly two. Since we didn't jump a fire out of RAC until the beginning of August, he ate roughly 30 doughnuts, which were tallied in place of fire jumps, and gained a bit of weight in the process.

Marcel is now trying to get under the 200-pound mark and also trying to get his cholesterol down to a manageable 200 milligrams per deciliter. I know I had to ask about that last part.

The next time you see Marcel, you can decide the true "weight" of the story.

We had a few old faces return to the base this year. After spending some time in Redding, **Erin "Kate" Springer** (RAC-08) came back as did **Jessica "Jesse" Haury** (RAC-08). Jesse spent the last year on the Bend/Fort Rock District of the Deschutes National Forest. **Casey "Pinto" Kuska** (RAC-08), yet another familiar face, came back for another good deal detail. **Armando "I Don't Want Pringles" Lara** (RAC-10) is joining us again from the Fremont/Winema National Forests, and **Dustin "Mondo, I Got Pringles" Underhill** (RAC-10) came back from the La Grande Hotshot crew.

One new face who joined the ranks of the RAC jumpers was **"Mean" Dean Chambers** (WYS-06). Dean was on loan to us from West Yellowstone for the season, and I hope he had a great time here, even though he did have to stay in the barracks. As a side note, I do believe Dean is in the running for the jump hog this year, meaning he's had the most jumps this year out of Redmond. Good goin' Dean. I meant that sarcastically!

A few of jumpers who moved on from the "Best Base on Earth" were **Mike Leslie** (RAC-97), who went back to North Carolina to be with his family. **Katie "KT" Scheer** (RAC-08) made the move down to Redding. **Nate "Young" Robinson** (RAC-08) found a job on a Fire Use Module somewhere in the United States. **Tye "Tye Bo" Taber** (WYS-06) found his way to Rawlins, Wyo., as a helicopter manager and heard he's havin' fun.

Laura Brown (RAC-10) and **Tommy "The Total Package" Parker** (NCSB-07) transferred to McCall this past season. Thank you all for being part of the Redmond family and hope to see you in the future.

There was some overhead movement this past off-season and season. In the operations department, Gary “What’s Happenin” Atteberry (RAC-97) slid into the assistant foreman position, while Ray “RFR” Rubio (RAC-95) took the spotter position. Justin “Woody” Wood (RAC -01) became the newest member of the ops department as the new squadleader, leaving Jeff “Heffe” Robinson (RDD-86) detailed as the operations foreman position.

The loft supervisor position is detailed to Dirk Stevens (RAC-91) with the guiding hand of Tony “TL” Loughton (RDD-83) not too far behind as the assistant loft supervisor.

In more loft news, Geoff Schultz (RDD-01) and Jason Barber (RAC-05) are detailed into the squadleader positions, while Brandon Coville (RAC-00) is in Sisters, Ore. as a fire operations guru. Tony “The Meat” Sleznick (RDD-92) is flying for some obscure airline in Alaska hauling who-knows-what for cargo.

The training department went through a few changes as well. When Mark Gibbons (RAC-87) retired, the assistant foreman position was vacant and Josh “The Other Josh” Cantrell (MSO-97) filled it. Ralph Sweeney (RAC-01) filled the vacant squadleader position behind Cantrell. Congratulations to those who moved up in the ranks and who also detailed and got some great experience in the process.

So, onto another subject in which I like to call “baby news.” Starting off, Aaron “AA” Skillings (RAC-05) and his wife, Erin, had a girl named Charlotte. Marcel Potvin and his wife Anne welcomed Lily Rose soon after. And rounding off our list, Dustin “Misfit” Underhill (RAC-10) and his wife, Alicia, had a girl named Harley. There was a big push to have girls this year and they all succeeded.

In the world of marriages and engagements, Dave Keller (RAC-04) and Roma recently married in Idaho. Congratulations to Dave and Roma. Peter Hammett (MSO-06) and longtime girlfriend Kristy are planning on getting married in March on Mt. Hood. He has yet to invite anyone from the base, so I’m sure it’s okay to crash the wedding!

So there you have it. Some fires were jumped in a short period of time and a willing individual ate doughnuts. Some people moved on during the season and some people came back, because, of course, it’s good to be a jumper.

Well, I hope all you jumpers out there, young and old, had a fun time and had the best deals of your lives. If you came through Redmond, I hope you had a great stay. Have a safe and festive rest of the year and as they say, “See you on the big one.”

North Cascades Base Report

by Nan Lea Floyd (Redmond ’00)

The fire season of 2011 carried with it historical significance. Most noteworthy, perhaps, is the retirement of the venerable Dale Longanecker (RAC-74). After 38 years of wearing Nomex – although Dale was jumping since before the advent of government-issued, fire-resistant clothing – Dale made his last official pass as loft foreman through the iconic Quonset hut at the end of 23 Airport Road on Sept. 29, 2011.

There are no numbers to quantify how many miles of Kevlar he has stitched or steering line he has replaced. His jump record attests to the longevity of this Methow Valley native’s smokejumping career: 362 fire, 534 practice, for a grand total of 896 jumps.

A small armada of media flocked the base on Dale’s last day. With cameras watching and the bros – along with his biological sisters and brothers, Dean Longanecker (NCSB-68) and Ernie Longanecker (NCSB-70), cheering – Dale center-punched the jump spot for his last official parachute ride as a paid Forest Service employee.

You might not see Dale driving his Toyota Prius on the commute to work anymore, but you’re still likely to see him grooming or skiing at the Loup Loup, tending his garden, or scanning the sky for celestial objects.

Michael Noe (NCSB-99) happily and humbly accepted the offer to fill the void Dale leaves behind as loft foreman, indicating that his feet might not be big enough to fit the imprint that his predecessor and mentor has made at NCSB, but he feels honored for the chance to try.

As the rain descended upon the Methow Valley, pushing over the Cascades in early autumn of 2011, an esoteric debate erupted among some of the crew: Could this season-ending weather event truly be called season-ending if there was never a season to begin with?

Humor assisted in adding levity to the situation, but the fact remains that 2011 will go down in the annals as being NCSB’s worst fire season on record. Casa 09 dropped jumpers on a total of six fires out of NCSB.

A cool, wet spring that pushed well into summer left the Methow Valley looking remarkably green for much of the fire season. Combined with a lack of flash in the sky, the business of smokejumping was not only delayed, but also significantly reduced.

As ears waited to hear the siren sound (offering relief from interminable base 8s, weekends off, and flat wal-lets), hands kept busy with a variety of projects. Beside the usual array of building and grounds upkeep, includ-

ing a major facelift for the weight room, the snookies lovingly oversaw construction of a new garden behind the mess hall.

The homemade welded gate entry and lawn furniture proves yet again that the talents of the GS-5 and 6 smokejumpers go beyond swinging Pulaskis. Not only is the "People's" garden an excellent lunch spot, but also rows of raised beds produced a sizable vegetable harvest, some of which was donated to the local food bank.

Base manager **Daren Belsby** (NCSB-86) sanctioned the development of a new spot to replace "Boesel's Wilderness" for the night, convenient practice jump. Instead of the cow-dung-infested field behind the paraloft, jumpers now vie for a 60-foot diameter circle filled with gravel to test their accuracy. Thirteen jumpers have already proven that it's possible to get everyone on the load inside the landing zone.

Jumpers also helped the local district with numerous tasks. **Matt Desimone** (RAC-97) reveled in a tiny taste of fly fishing-like ecstasy (minus the fly rod), wading along the Methow River while helping Fisheries out with stream surveys. Additionally, jumpers went out cutting saw line for Range, doing repair work and supply delivery for the lookouts, assisting Recreation with trailhead and campground maintenance, and caging cones of White Bark Pine for Silviculture.

While some waited out the coveted Alaska boost, which was never to be, a few trickled down to the Southwest on single-resource orders, and 10 jumpers made Worcester, Mass., a month-long home in June, climbing trees for the Animal Plant Health and Inspection Service.

Searching hardwoods for the destructive Asian Longhorned Beetle by day required an additional search of body parts for ticks by night. The blood-sucking pests attached themselves to many a jumper, in certain cases requiring sensitive extraction, giving new meaning to the saying: "Trust your jump (climbing) partner."

A mid-August lightning storm finally provided some dazzling hope that the fire season would be salvaged. Unfortunately, out of some 400 strikes that pounded the Okanogan-Wenatchee National Forest, NCSB responded to only a couple of fires.

Thankfully, the picture wasn't as grim across the border in Oregon, and the majority of the base eventually found itself on the road between Redmond and Redding for the latter part of August and early September.

According to **Scott Wicklund** (NCSB-91), the jumps were of epic proportion with every leap out of the plane door entailing a face-off with some prominent mountain. **Justin Cook** (NCSB-10) embodied the essence of *carpe diem* and deferred returning to school for the fall semester in order to catch the late bust.

He reports, though, that his dropout status will be

short-lived, and in January he will continue his studies.

The small crew left behind at NCSB kept its spirits up, eating waffles and performing invaluable public services. On Labor Day, for example, they collected numerous plastic ducks floating down the Methow River at the finish line of an annual fundraising event for the local Kiwanis Club. Good deeds are sometimes rewarded, and the following day the powers above sanctioned the release of the hostage load to Redmond.

Other news of record: The brood of NCSB offspring continues to grow. **Dan Ryen** (NCSB-08) welcomed daughter Naomi to the world at the beginning of June, and **Charlie McCarthy** (NCSB-04) became a first-time father with the birth of his son, Cane.

JT Sawyer (NCSB-07) and Michael Noe are both going to be changing diapers for a second round this winter.

On a connubial note, **Fidel Verduzco** (NCSB-09) will, no doubt, be flashing his signature Colgate smile when he marries his fiancée in November.

West Yellowstone Base Report

by **Chris Boyer** (West Yellowstone '11)
Ernie Walker (Redding '01)

The grizzly bears weren't the only ones busy in the greater Yellowstone area this summer. The West Yellowstone base saw more action than it has in recent years accommodating boosters from Missoula, Grangeville, and Alaska during a bust that began in mid-August and lasted through September.

The base hosted 20 jumps and sent out five pounders. Two mixed loads even jumped a fire within the Yellowstone National Park boundaries for the first time since 2009. During this chaotic time, there were many individual jump milestones reached at the base. **Bobby Sutton** (MSO-91) hit 300 jumps, **Mark "Captain Awesome" Belitz** (WYS-01) with 250, **Ernie "E-dog" Walker** (RDD-01) and **Cindy Champion** (WYS-99) reached 200 apiece, **Nick "Mongo" Stanzak** (WYS-05) and **Jason Gibb** (GAC-04) each achieved 150.

Ward Scanson (FBX-07) and **Joe "Sock" Rock** (WYS-05) each jumped 100, while **Robert Smith** (MSO-07) reached 50.

The base added four new rookie detailers this year with **Derek "Ric" Wittenberg**, **David Day**, **Rob "Don't Call Me Tim" Thibault**, and **Chris "Pillow Boy" Boyer**.

West Yellowstone now has 10 individuals jumping the Ram Air system, with Rock and Jason Gibb being the 2011 graduates of the New Man Ram Air program. **Billy Bennett** (WYS-98) became a permanent as the

official tanker base manager.

It took a while for things to get going, but the jumpers were busy with project work in Red Lodge and Michigan. Early in the season, the base sent ten jumpers down to the satellite bases in Region 3, as well as sending three to Alaska. They also kept up their currency with weekly practice jumps and tested the FS-14+ parachute canopy.

Immediately after rookie training, the exhausted rookies were met with the task of handcrafting a "Little Wooden Fire Engine" that was to be displayed at multiple museums across the western United States. They also participated in assisting with the Junior Smokejumper Program, a program designed for children to raise fire awareness.

Similar to the relentless honey badger, the base never hesitates to lend a helping hand, as evidenced through the early start date of our plane to assist with the fires in Alaska and even drop paracargo to our forest radio technician for a radio repeater repair mission.

Noteworthy of mentioning was the stellar performance of **Jason "Doggg" Hill** (WYS-07), who topped the charts with 11 jumps and deserves the title of Jump King of 2011. This year also marks the final year for the man, the myth, the legend, a genuine honey badger himself, **Hardy Bloemeke** (MSO-77). He rookied in 1877 or 1977 and has contributed to the base in recent years as the training foreman.

Hardy will forever be known for his passion and knowledge for smokejumping, his sense of humor, as well as his flamboyant PT attire. After his retirement, he plans on flying air attack missions when it doesn't interfere with his skiing. His final fire jump was with Cindy Champion on the Gallatin National Forest.

On a lighter side, **Eric "Buddha" Held** (WYS-06) became engaged to Shannon Hubbard at the beginning of the summer and plans on marrying in the summer of 2012. The base also hosted a group of Swedish foresters who visited in July.

It was an exciting and eclectic year in West Yellowstone, culminating in a successful end of the year party that involved a raffle, rookie skit and the destruction of three party piñatas. Each smokejumper at the base can look back with fond memories of 2011, the year of the honey badger. 2012 will definitely have high expectations for the smokejumpers of West Yellowstone.

McCall Base Report

by **Derek Hoban** (McCall '02)

The Cabela's catalogs are distributed throughout the break room, loft and bathroom stalls, but before we turn in our Pulaskis and bent shovels for rod, rifle and Ruger

Red Label 20s, let's take a look back at the good and less-good fortunes that we shared here in McCall 2011.

Spring '11 saw some preseason work opportunities on the Region 8 burn module details as well as some March and April fire assignments to Arizona, New Mexico and Colorado. Spring also saw the venerable **Fred Pavlovic** (MYC-89) hang up the whites for good as he has retired down to New Mexico.

Fred leaves with 153 fire jumps and 404 total jumps, 579 different cardboard splints demonstrated in refresher, and a legacy of modernizing the medical procedures and equipment as the base's first-aid program coordinator.

Also grounded for all of 2011 was another old war-horse – the DC-3. At press time, the future use of the DC-3 has not been determined and is pending review by the regional and Washington offices. In the absence of the "Doug," a third Twin Otter was hired under contract for the 2011 fire season, which led to the return of pilots **Eldon Askelson** and **Mary LaMoy** under contract for the summer.

New Smokejumper Pilot Supervisor **Bill Mank** led reorganization and rebuilding of the McCall smokejumper pilot program. With the help of instructors **Buster Delmonte** and **Nels Jensen** (MSO-62), **Bill** and **Matt Disch** received their smokejumper captain qualifications, while they and, previously certified, **Capt. Allan Baum** all received their backcountry flight certifications this summer. **Bill** is feeling good about the new faces and direction of the pilot program and is looking forward to keeping his core group of pilots together here in McCall for many years to come.

Big Ernie and Ops Foreman **Chris Niccoli** (MYC-95) spent most of the early summer dispatching smokejumpers to contend with the dragons that plagued the southern U.S. from Arizona to Florida and just about all points in between. Multiple booster assignments to Silver City and Albuquerque and single-resource assignments throughout the South and Southwest kept McCall's jumpers on the road and out of a fourth consecutive year of heavy June rainfall in Idaho.

By the end of June, **Damon Nelson** (RDD-97) had already honed his tan in Georgia, Florida, Colorado, Arizona and New Mexico, while Silver City detailers **Dennis McCoy** (MYC-83), **Kai Friedrichs** (GAC-99), **Keith Suemnick** (MYC-07), **Bennett Childs** (MYC-07), **Dan Booth** (MYC-07), **Kurtis Ryan** (MYC-08) and **Pete Dutchick** (MYC-09) all returned to McCall lonesome, ornery, and mean with enough overtime to kill lesser men and tales of big rocks, angry winds and warm Buffalo Bar beer.

Mid-season saw enough salt leave McCall to jerk all the moose west of Miles City, as **Jim Duzak** (MYC-84), **Larry Wilson** (MYC-84) and **Pat Withen** (BOI-79) all

retired in July and August. Having raised the pursuit of the Good Deal to an art form, Duzak retires to the sun and surf of the California coast with 142 fire jumps and 300 total jumps and aspirations to join the U.S. Seniors Motocross tour.

While giving up his summer job, Withen will continue his college professorship back in Virginia having made 196 fire jumps and 403 total jumps out of Boise, Cave Junction and McCall. Pat's looking forward to buffing out his van, spending time with his Bitterroot Hotshot son, Damien, and relaxing with a couple of cold ones on the dock, rather than holding that line with dirt, during his future summers in McCall.

As McCall's training foreman from 2002 to 2011, Larry will be remembered for the high training standards that he maintained for himself and the base, as well as his mentoring of McCall's Ned class of 2002 – widely considered to be the greatest rookie class in smokejumper history.

Larry retires with 148 fire jumps and 459 total jumps, and the respect and gratitude of the many jumpers with whom he has worked and mentored during his career. He's looking forward to finally finishing multiple house projects in his retirement and to "shaking out the cobwebs" throughout his golden years.

To replace the salt lost, new Head Ned trainer "Lunchless" Todd Haynes (MYC-02) has offered up three new Neds for Big Ernie's pleasure, and by all accounts Neds Patrick Romportl (MYC-11), Lucas Dixon (MYC-11) and Steven Gonzalez (MYC-11) acquitted



Mike Cramer (CJ-59) still falling timber near Yoncolla, Oregon (Courtesy M. Cramer)

themselves well during their first season of smokejumping. While Romportl and Dixon impressed many with the versatility of their skit performances, it was Gonzalez who took home the coveted Golden Spatula award at the annual year-end T-party.

Another title went to the young guys, as Colin Lannigan (MYC-10) won the hotly contested 2011 MFTC title belt by pumping out 29 pull-ups, 115 push-ups, 82 sit-ups, and running his mile in 8:40, dethroning all-time champ Eric Messenger (GAC-00) in the process. It's back to the training room for Mess this winter.

Year's end? Not without mentioning the great August Siege of '11, which saw the base jumped out for eleven consecutive

days. Newly qualified spotters Matt Summerfield (MYC-01) and Matt Huber (MYC-02) performed admirably moving bodies and cargo out the door amidst the intense heat and fast action of dirty August, and multiple good deals were had by all.

No one found more good deals in 2011 than this year's jump kings, Dan Booth and Bob Charley (MYC-93), who set the frantic pace with 10 fire jumps apiece. Up in the air, nobody does it better or more often than the legendary Michael Cooper (MYC-86), who added eight more this year to his fast-growing McCall record of 273 fire jumps.

Overall, McCall jumpers executed 238 fire jumps in 2011 with 53 of those coming out of Silver City. Assistant Loadmaster Jarrod "Shaq" Sayer (MYC-95) performed his 300th jump in August, while Kevin LaBella (NCSB-91), making up for all of those years he left

early to teach school, took all of the early and late season detail assignments that he could. As this year's overtime hog, Kevin is making Goldman Sachs look laissez-faire in their wealth-accumulation efforts. Beers on Kevin this winter if you find yourself heading through McCall!

Under the direction of Loadmaster **Joe Brinkley** (MYC-98), who is revolutionizing the utilization of paracargo in the state of Idaho, McCall delivered 31,349 pounds of cargo this summer, including dropping more than six tons of supplies in support of non-jumper fires on the Boise, Salmon-Challis and Payette National Forests.

In training, Assistant Foreman **Jeff "Big Sugar" Schricker** (MYC-98) stepped into the void left by Wilson's departure and shook out what few cobwebs remained.

McCall smokejumpers completed 53 fire courses, 24 task books, and 1,638 mandatory online training sessions in 2011. Big Sugar himself ate seven food boxes and most of a fresh food drop – all on just two jumper fires for the season.

In the loft, after a lengthy search, **Todd Franzen** (MYC-98) was hired to fill the assistant foreman position, and he seamlessly forged a dynamic, pedal-down management team with Loft Foreman **Brett Bittenbender** (MYC-88). For the season, 1,536 parachutes were packed in the loft, 117 chute repairs were made in the sewing room, and five senior and two master riggers were newly certified.

New Assistant Operations Foreman **Matt Galyardt** (MYC-02) has the base grounds looking better than ever after several months of winter research led to the purchase of a brand new Snapper riding lawn mower for the base. **Jeremy Cowie** (MYC-06) and Kyle "Good Times" **Esparza** (MYC-10) put that mower to good use in a summer-long, dandelion-eradication battle from which they emerged the victors.

And finally all of the above happened as the smoke-jumper base itself underwent a months-long remodel that included a new roof, HVAC, insulation and carpet installation throughout the building. The McCall base has never looked so good – and who'd expect any less under the steady hand of Base Manager **Frankie Romero** (MYL-89). McCall smokejumpers – come on up and visit us in 2012!

Missoula Base Report

by **Court Wallace** (Grangeville '04)

The 2011 Missoula season started out differently for each of us. If you were lucky enough to get to Region 3 early, chances are you will be eating prime rib all winter

long, as opposed to hamburger.

The season was filled with the usual duties: training new jumpers, fuels/RX work, GETA (Google earth group), climbing on the East Coast, NATICK work, jumping, pounding, boosting, manufacturing ... and even though June, July and the beginning of August were relatively slow out of Missoula (IA Jump operation wise), the activity picked up on Aug. 22, and life as a jumper became good.

The overall numbers for Missoula in 2011 were 31 fires jumped (first jump Aug. 10), 193 jumpers out the door, two boost requests received (one from Region 5, one from Canada), seven boost requests filled (two to Albuquerque, one to Alaska, one to Boise, three to Grangeville) and 107 single-resource assignments.

Miles City was set up for the first time since 2007 and was able to get three fires jumped and seven single-resource assignments out before shutting down.

Over the winter and spring months, MSO sent three modules to R-8, two modules to R-9, one module to R-3, and around 10 climbers to the East Coast. Projects around the base involved the usual FAA rigger classes, manufacturing of harnesses, containers, jumpsuits, bags, NATICK parachutes, and local fuels work.

Sarah Doehring (MSO-91) and "Rocky" **Brian Ahshapanek** (GAC-90) headed up the Silver City detail. Originally, the detail consisted of 20 jumpers who were in place on May 8, but on May 13 an additional 10 detailers were requested due to fire activity in R-3.

The detailer breakout for 2011 was 19 from Region 1 (nine MSO, five GAC, five WYS), seven from Region 4 (MYC), and the BLM provided four (two BOI, two FBX). It was determined May 18 there were too many bros in SVC, and a second R-3 base was set up at Albuquerque's Double Eagle II Airport.

Albuquerque was initially staffed by jumpers from Silver City, who were eventually replaced by three additional detailers from R-1 and booster crews from R-5 and R-1. Overall, initial attack (IA) activity was slightly above average with 28 fires jumped (19 in Silver City, nine in Albuquerque) and 200 jumpers out the door, but the bros were kept busy working on large fires.

There were 11 ground-crew actions taken (seven in Silver City, four in Albuquerque) and 43 single-resource assignments filled (36 in Silver City, seven in Albuquerque).

Fire activity dictated the need for a total of seven boost requests to Region 3. Silver City received four boosts (two from R-5, two from R-4) with the first arriving April 30 (sorry, R-6 – no love; talk to NICC).

Albuquerque received three boosts, one from R-5 and two from R-1. The majority of boosters stayed for 21 days with some taking days off in place and extend-

ing to 30 days. Overall R-3 was an excellent place to be.

The rookie trainers had their hands full with a R-1 rookie class of 25. Fourteen MSO rookies completed training in 2011, which consisted of eight regular hires and six detailers. The 2011 MSO rookie class included Tyson Atkinson, Brian Bressan, Sam Bullington, Will Burks, Kyle Errecart, Stephen Latham, Megan McKinnie, Nate Ochs, Ian Pohowsky, Daniel Poole, Eli Schned, Brian Schwitters, Edward Smith and Wesley Steenhoven.

Once again GAC hosted “hell week,” and from there the operation was moved to MSO for units and jumping, with cadre from all three R-1 bases. Thanks to all the trainers and support cadre for this extensive time commitment. They did receive significant amounts of rain throughout training that added to the experience.

This year, nine Region 1 jumpers successfully completed “New Man Ram-Air” training. The training was five weeks long (one week of rigger training and four weeks of jump training) and was facilitated with a combined USFS and BLM cadre, which took place in Missoula at the end of April.

Rick Olivares (MSO-07), Travis Parker (MSO-08), Stephen Reed (MSO-95), Ashton Ferruzzi (MSO-08), and J.T. Gilman (WYS-06) were the five MSO jumpers who trained on the Ram-Air system. To date MSO currently has 18 jumpers on the Ram-Air system with a total of 31 Forest Service Ram-Air jumpers in R-1.

Many thanks to the BLM trainers and loft personnel who once again provided expertise and oversight to this training – their assistance is truly appreciated.

Also a big “thanks” goes out for the bros who had to be on “hold” (possibly missing fire and project work assignments) in order to support the logistical and technical demands of such an in-depth training. Currently there are plans to train more R-1 Forest Service jumpers on the Ram-Air system in 2012; the numbers have not been decided, but most likely will be between 8-10 Region 1 jumpers.

MSO had very little turnover this past year. Rogers Warren (MSO-00) accepted a job in R-3, and in December Edmund Ward (MSO-80) retired as base manager.

Thanks for all the work you did. Eddy, we hope retirement is going well.

Mike Fritsen (MSO-95) won the “battle” for base manager in the spring and managed to get to R-3 on a boost. Clem Pope (GAC-03) accepted a GS-6 (13/13) position; T. Wallace (MSO-06), S. Pfahler (MS-03), and Courtney Wallace (GAC-04) accepted GS-07 positions; Jake Besmer (MSO-03) and David Bihr (MSO-01) accepted GS-08 spotter positions. Hopefully, MSO will be able to do more hiring this coming winter (once the federally mandated “hiring freeze” ends).

At the beginning of the summer, the AFD opened up a Montessori school on campus (otherwise known as the “day care”). Ironically enough there seems to be a “baby boom” at the MSO base ... to date there are some 11-13 jumpers who recently had or are expecting “babies” in 2011. The count is hard to keep track of because it seems to be adding up daily. Needless to say, there is a waiting list at the new “day care.”

Jessie Thomas (MSO-04) was very influential in making this happen, and with assistance – a lot of which was volunteer – Jessie and the “day care committee” have managed to make it happen despite several unsuccessful tries from predecessors. Even though many people may gawk at the idea of a “jumper day care” (until they need day care), it is quite handy and is open to the public, with a discount given to government employees.

In late August MSO received 21 jumpers from Fort St. John, British Columbia. This was an excellent opportunity for both American and Canadian jumpers.

At the time R-1 was tapped out of jumpers and was receiving moderate to heavy IA. The Canadian jumpers were able to fill the void and allowed us to better serve our users, and it allowed the Canadian jumpers to be immersed into our operation and cross train, and of course it was beneficial to keeping the door open for future joint operations.

Most all the Canadian jumpers got two fire jumps or more, and they managed to be in Missoula the same time the Miss Montana Pageant was taking place at their hotel.

All in all the season was a good one. Now that it is October, some jumpers are “tapping out,” while others are holding on ‘til the bitter end, or planning hunting trips, planning ski trips, planning exotic vacations, buying cool stuff like high-end camouflage, or taking time off to salvage what is left of their marriages.

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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.

Boise Base Report

by Jake Brollier (Redding '95)

The fire season of 2011 has come to a close. The previous two years Mother Nature provided slow seasons for fire activity. This fire season was shaping up the same, but when it was all said and done we had steady business. Spring brought an extended pattern of cold and wet weather to the Northwest, but we still were able to send jumpers to users in Montana BLM for prescribed fire operations and the south/southeast for fire suppression operations. In the fall, jumpers participated in fuels reduction for the state of Washington and continued to support the south/southeast area with single resource assignments and jumpers for prescribed fire operations.

Hearty congratulations to **Calvin McGowan**, **Dan Staab**, **Tommy Hayes**, and **Cody Skinner** as our newest rookies to make it through the training program. We gained a fine addition to our group. Also, we would like to welcome **Chris Lord** (FBX-08) and **Jake Class** (MYC-04), who transferred from Alaska and McCall respectively last spring. On a similar but opposite vein, we lost **Rich Zimmerlee** (RDD-95) to the Boise National Forest as the FMO for the Idaho City Ranger District. **Todd Jinkins** (NIFC-98) also flew the coop to the Forest Service as the R-4 High Risk Specialty Programs Manager. **Tim Schaeffer** (MYC-92) picked up a job on the Nez Pierce National Forest and is the new FMO on the Moose Creek Ranger District. **Josh Graham** (NIFC-05) is now the BLM Central Zone AFMO for Upper Colorado River Fire Management Unit out of Rifle, CO. We wish them all good luck on their new endeavors and thank them for all the hard work and dedication to the Boise Smokejumpers.

A very special thanks to **Jason Hofman** (NIFC-88) and **Walt Wasser** (MYC-79). Jason hung up his harness for good and retired January 30th last spring and was available for AD assignments as a single resource. Wally, a.k.a. "The Legendary Legend," succeeded to become the

jumper with the most fire jumps in the 71-year history of smokejumping. On September 30th, Wally hung his harness up and walked away with 395 fire jumps, 834 total jumps and a 33 year career as a smokejumper.

Steve Stroud (NIFC-03) and **Brian Cresto** (NIFC-04) became our two newest spotters last spring and kicked enough of us out the door to become fully qualified to rotate with the other veteran spotters. Congrats to them! **Jared Hohn** (NIFC-01) became the new Assistant Loft Foreman last year and **Todd "Unit" Johnson** (NIFC-98) is the new Assistant Operations Foreman.

Looking back over the 2011 season, we had 76 total jumpers at our base. There were 106 fires jumped with 10 fires pounded with a total of 569 smokejumpers on fires. This does not include the jumps in Alaska in the spring and summer that afforded great training and operational experience for the Boise Smokejumpers. We also had 13 Fire Management details at the local, district, state and national level. In addition we had 25 people on rosters for Type 1, Type 2, and Type 3 Incident Management Teams. Several of them were able to get assignments with their respective IMTs and others were able to go out as single resources.

While 2011 was not one of our busiest seasons for initial attack, there was good opportunity for us to work on and complete various task books on larger, extended attack fires in the Southern/Southwest Areas: i.e. Texas, New Mexico, and Arizona. In Missoula, the BLM supported the USFS R-1 Ram-Air program with assistance from our parachute training cadre and our loft in the spring with good success. Thanks for all the help from our trainers and the dedication to all the students.

This year the Boise BLM Smokejumpers are looking at having a rookie class in 2012. We intend to have three aircraft, plus the shared Dornier with Alaska.

Have a great winter, stay safe, and we will catch up with you on our next update.

Fort St. John Base Report

by James Bergen (Fort St. John '02)

I would like to start by thanking all the bases who hosted Canadian jumpers in 2011, and a special thanks to **Sarah Doehring** (MSO-91) and **Robin Embry** (GAC-85) for all their hard work to make our boost to America a memorable one.

Canadian smokejumping originally started in 1947 in Saskatchewan but disbanded in 1967. If you want to see an interesting bit of history on the Saskatchewan program, go to archives.cbc.ca and enter the keyword

MEMBERSHIP CORNER

John McDaniel (CJ-57)

NSA Membership Chairman

There have been numerous questions about when memberships are due for renewal. You will receive a *postcard notice* about six weeks before your renewal date, a second card will be sent on the renewal date, and a final card on the publication of the current quarterly magazine.

“smokejumpers” to watch a short documentary CBC did on the program in 1964.

Ontario followed Saskatchewan with a program designed to deliver equipment by parachute to ground crews. Unfortunately, the ground crews were never adequately trained in parachute retrieval and eventually this “paracargo” operation ended.

The next stop for smokejumping in Canada was the Yukon Territory. Like most of northern Canada, the Yukon firefighting authorities were challenged with limited funding, large distances and very fast-moving fires. So in 1974 the Yukon employed contract smokejumpers for four years before experimenting with a rappel program.

Small payloads, long distances, and limited fuel caches of northern Canada all combined to end the rappel experiment.

The Northwest Territories followed suit by hiring contract smokejumpers in 1977 through to 1982 but was eventually disbanded when the NWT implemented a local-only hire program. Smokejumping returned to the Yukon in 1984 where it operated for 12 years on a contract basis. The Yukon Forest Service was unable to renew this contract in 1996 when the Yukon Government also implemented a local-only hire program.

The British Columbia Forest Service entertained the idea of a smokejumping program in 1997, hiring our Base Manager **Tom Reinboldt** (YXY-89)(Whitehorse/Yukon) and three other ex-Yukon jumpers to start the program. Smokejumper training started the spring of 1998 in Smithers with 18 rookies.

The first fire jump came in 1999; the program moved from Smithers in 2000 to its present location in Fort St. John. Fast-forward to the present day, and I’m pleased to say smokejumping is alive and thriving in British Columbia. A big reason for the early success of this program was the assistance of the Region 1 and Region 6 smokejumpers, and the program has been helped immensely over the years by the ongoing support of the Missoula base.

It was generally a slow year for firefighting in British Columbia in 2011 and jumping was no exception. The program did 385 proficiency jumps and 60 fire jumps. But like most smokejumping programs, a lack of fire didn’t mean we weren’t busy.

Plans to start a second smokejumping base in Mackenzie are underway, and the jump training for their crews was completed this year. Currently, our organization has expanded to look like this: Reinboldt is still the base manager, and he is supported with four overhead staff and 40 jumpers for a total of 45 active jumpers in the province. Continued expansion is planned and the hope is to see a fully operational base in Mackenzie with a second aircraft.

Finally the opportunity for 21 Canadian jumpers to

go the U.S. and jump fires and work with U.S. jumpers has given us all memories and created friendships that most will cherish for a lifetime. We look forward to the opportunity of having all of you on Canadian soil to jump some fires in the future.

Alaska Base Report

by **Brett Fairchild** (Redmond '05)

The snow stayed late this spring in Alaska. Second refresher saw many practice jump spots still frozen and usable, not growing mosquitoes or supporting the local moose population.

Even with the extended spring, fire season came fast and furious about mid-May. For a while it seemed we were going to get lucky with another Alaskan money-making season. We even supported a fair amount of boosters, giving them a good base of overtime hours early on. However, by mid-June we were getting plenty of showers, and the fire world in Alaska was below average.

The doughnut eaters in Paracargo had a good year, considering. The overall pounds dropped was well below the last two years but seems about par for the decade. With the help of a few military contract paracargo specialists, our Paracargo boys have been testing a new release mechanism designed for high-wind drops.

This system releases when the weight of the cargo lands on the ground, allowing the cargo chutes to float freely and not drag the cargo across the windy tundra or into the water. This could be very beneficial on certain fire and project drops.

It should be noted that **Jeff Stark** (FBX-03) in Paracargo has somehow managed to tag his name across an Apache Indian Reservation in New Mexico or Arizona. Weird.

The motorboat “club” was pretty dismal this year with no operational drops or shifts on fires. The fleet should be ready for a bomber year in the future as most boats are rehabbed and repaired. I am sure many training runs are planned in the future, ensuring the boats run in tip-top condition.

Loft personnel are constantly driving forward, testing new chutes and providing flight time under different canopies for interested jumpers. Early in the year, the reserve MT1S chute was rigged and jumped multiple times as a main. The focus on this training was providing time with the somewhat smaller, faster canopy for jumpers, giving them an idea how the reserve manipulates, should they ever have to deploy one.

Another reserve chute was tested by a small working group later in the season – the PD Low Bulk, a seven-cell reserve. Like the MT1S, it was flown as a main. This

canopy is still being tested and evaluated.

Training shop had their hands full in the spring, herding cats into taking all the required online training. I am pretty sure most of the overhead still need to take five or six college credits' worth of EEO and Diversity training. Soon most will have associate's degrees on how to be civil.

Another training highlight was evaluating stand-up exits for Ram-Air jumpers. A small, experienced working group was selected for evaluation. The goal was at least six stand-up exits per jumper, with several cameras capturing the performance. The training shop is still discussing its findings.

Towards the end of August, the firearms instructors at the base were blessed with an opportunity to attend a one-day course put on by the infamous instructors from Gunsite Academy. This course was designed for defensive shooting involving large mammals. The information was top-notch and gave the firearm instructors plenty of material to pass on.

If you have ever walked the halls of the Alaska jump shack, you've probably heard someone loudly proclaim "88" at some point in time. In fact you have probably heard it loudly slurred during the big flip. Unfortunately, you probably won't hear it much anymore, unless it's a rookie's birth year.

The last remaining Bros of this holdout year have all moved on to bigger and better things. **Chip Houde** (FBX-88) has done an amazing job as the statewide Bureau of Land Management aviation manager the last handful of years. Under mandatory retirement he gracefully stepped down, toasted a cold one with the boys and announced any bro was welcome to come ride surf at his paradise in Mexico. Chip, we are all very sad to see you go.

Thankfully, **Gary Baumgartner** (FBX-88) was offered Chip's position about mid-summer. Gary was assistant base manager for the last four years. His knowledge and expertise will be sorely missed at the shack, as will his level mind and cool temper. However, we are all glad another jumper filled Chip's position and take comfort in the fact the Gary is next door drinking coffee in the head shed.

Another valuable firefighter from "88," **Charlie Brown** (FBX-88), moved up in the ranks. Life could not be better in the Charlie world right now, as he was accepted into the super-competitive position of air tactical supervisor on Bravo-8, a national ASM platform. His pilot is **Don Bell** (GAC-95). They both are based in their hometowns, Durango, Colo. and Redmond, Ore., respectively and report to NIFC when needed.

Charlie is a newlywed, marrying his beautiful wife, Julie, Oct. 8. His remote alternate work base allows him to enjoy her and their passion of fly fishing.

Congrats, Charlie and Julie ... tight lines!

On another note, the wiry and tattooed **J.P. Knapp** (NCSB-96) is moving on to enjoy his home in the beautiful Methow Valley. J.P. suffered a cracked femur this year and had to sit out the entire season, scraping together a few hours here and there figuring out the dispatch world. He will be missed.

Our EMT supervisor, **Anthony Marchini** (FBX-01), has accepted a position as a structural firefighter/paramedic for the Anchorage Fire Department. This keeps him closer to his family and the sheep mountains. His medical knowledge and sense of humor will be missed by all.

The "Free-stetlers" – **John "Freebird" Fremont** (FBX-05) and **Kristin Hostetler** (FBX-08) – were due to be wed in mid-October in Wyoming. Kristin had another bomber jump season with two long boosts down south, elevating her to "Jump King" status with 17 jumps this year. Their offspring could give "Fish" – **Isaiah Fischer** (RDD-05) – a run for his money as the next Lance Armstrong. Congrats to Freebird and Hoss!

Brandon Petersen (FBX-01) and his wife, Lynn, added another family member this summer. Lynn finally got her baby girl. It will give something for her mob of older brothers to do when she hits dating age.

Rob Miller (FBX-05) and wife, Lisa, had a rug rat of their own. The little boy might put a damper on Rob's brewing and stilling activities. I wonder if when watching Sesame Street, he might think Oscar is Dad. Just kiddin', Rob, aught-five!

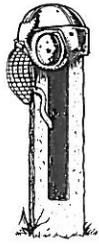
Matt Allen (FBX-95) and Tommi had a baby boy last spring in what Matt affectionately calls "calving season." The Pac-12 Conference is already calling and offering football scholarships.

Brian Kirkman (FBX-08) and Rachael added a baby boy to their family this summer. That being said, I believe we have almost two casa loads of infants and toddlers running around the shack sometime during the day.

Tune in to The History Channel and you might hear a familiar voice. If you can recognize the face behind the beard and Coke-bottle glasses, you will probably be hooked on watching all the episodes.

The infamous and unnaturally tough **Marty Meierotto** (FBX-94) signed a contract to film a series of reality TV shows portraying a trapper in Montana, one in the southeast somewhere, and Marty himself. The show will give a day in the life of Marty on his different hunts in the fall and out on the trapline. It will be entertaining for sure and give bros plenty of material to rib Marty with. I urge everyone to watch; stay tuned for program times.

The Alaska jumpers are still burning; only this time of year it's airplane gas, gun powder and firewood. We hope to see many of you next year. Have a great holiday season! 🦌



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

John Frankovich (Missoula '46)

John, 85, died Oct. 24, 2010, in Tucson, Arizona. He attended Montana School of Mines – now known as Montana Tech – and earned a degree from the University of Montana School of Business and School of Law. John joined the Army and served as a tail gunner in Europe during World War II. He jumped at Missoula in 1946-47 before embarking on a career with State Farm Insurance in Great Falls, Montana. John then joined the legal department of the Anaconda Mining Company in Butte, Montana, and transferred in 1968 to Tucson during Anaconda's expansion to the Southwest. He was later lead counsel for the Twin Buttes Copper Mine in Green Valley, Arizona; the open-pit mine became a joint venture called Anamax, where John worked until his retirement.

Robert "Bob" Hilbun (McCall '51)

Bob, 84, died June 10, 2011, in Missoula, Montana. After an honorable discharge from the military, he graduated from the University of Washington in 1948. Bob ran a successful electrical contracting business first in Richland, Washington, and then in Whitefish, Montana, where he started Big Mountain Electric. He earned a pilot's license before he learned to drive a car, and logged thousands of hours during his lifetime. Bob jumped from McCall in 1951 and 1952. Following retirement, he and his wife split their time between Whitefish and Punta Chivato, Baja California, Mexico.

Gerald "Jerry" Linton (Missoula '48)

Jerry, 83, died July 18, 2011, in Spokane, Washington. He attended Montana State University in 1948-49 and the Commercial Trades Institute in Chicago in 1950. He was drafted into the Army in January 1951, serving a two-year stint in the 231st Combat Engineers Battalion "A" Company. Jerry jumped from Missoula in 1948 and 1949, but already had Forest Service experience as he had worked in the Blister Rust Control Project during summers in high school. He volunteered to jump in the Lolo National Forest to help find and recover an injured hunter. Jerry went skydiving on

his 63rd and 80th birthdays. He was a Life Member of the NSA.

Nicholas "Nick" Helburn (Missoula '44)

Nick, 92, died June 11, 2011, in Boulder, Colorado. He completed his undergraduate degree at the University of Chicago and received a Master's in Agricultural Economics at Montana State University. Nick had spent a year at Harvard University, but left to spend a year working in the New Hampshire mountains. Nick was a conscientious objector during World War II; his alternative service was jumping from Missoula in the 1944-45 seasons, following a stint of building bridges in Tennessee. He began his professional career at Montana State, helping to establish the Department of Earth Sciences. Nick spent a year in Turkey in 1951 on a Ford Foundation grant; the research from this time resulted in a book about dry land agriculture and village culture in Anatolia. Nick moved to Boulder in 1965 to direct the High School Geography Project, one of the "New Social Studies" curriculum projects sponsored by the National Science Foundation to develop a new approach for teaching geography in high schools. He became the first director of the Education Resources Information Center for Social Studies. He joined the Geography Department at the University of Colorado in 1971 and served as chairman for three years. He was also elected president of the Association of American Geographers.

Richard C. "Dick" Eriksson (Missoula '60)

Dick, 70, died Nov. 2, 2010, in Atlanta, Georgia. He attended Western State College in Colorado, where he earned bachelors and master's degrees in Business Administration, taking those skills to work as a representative in truck sales for the Mack Truck and International Harvester companies. Dick worked as an Outward Bound instructor in North Carolina and Georgia. He jumped at Missoula from 1960 through 1967. Dick was injured and became a quadriplegic in 1982. Despite his handicap, he volunteered in the Peer Support Program at Shepard Spinal Center in Atlanta, and joined friends and relatives on hunting excursions.

Dave Ferguson (Associate Trail Crew Member)

Dave, 69, died of a heart attack while hiking in Glacier National Park with several of his smokejumper and associate trail crew friends. Dave contributed his engineering skills to several of the Colorado trail crew projects, most notably the Twin Lakes and Glade Guard Station projects. Dave is survived by his wife, Peggy, and son, Ryan, in Arvada, Colorado.

Dale Haver (Missoula '64)

Dale, 26, died April 11, 1969, in Vietnam due to injuries he suffered two days earlier when his OH-

6A helicopter crashed on the Michelin Plantation, 11 kilometers northeast of Dau Tieng, Binh Duong Province, during a reconnaissance mission. Another crewman died upon impact while two others were injured. Dale was a resident of Whitehouse, New Jersey, upon enlistment in the Army Reserve in 1968. He rose to first lieutenant, HQ Company, 2nd Brigade, 1st Cavalry Division. Dale jumped from Missoula during 1964, 65, 67, Grangeville in 66 and Fairbanks in 1968.

Even though 40+ years late, we're printing this obit in response to information sent in after the October issue. (Ed.)

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Total funds disbursed to smokejumpers and families since 2004 – \$15,800

Mail your Good Samaritan Fund contributions to:

Chuck Sheley, 10 Judy Ln., Chico, CA 95926

Thomas “Jerry” Walters (Missoula ’66)

Jerry, 24, died May 27, 1968, in Quang Tri Province, Vietnam. He attended the University of Southern Mississippi after earning an Associate’s degree from Jones County Junior College in 1963. He jumped from Missoula in 1966 before joining the Marines later that year, earning the rank of corporal after serving in Guantanamo Bay, Cuba, before being assigned to the Demilitarized Zone in Vietnam in December 1967. Jerry, a rifleman, died from small-arms fire on the ground in combat while serving with E Company, 2nd Battalion, 9th Marines, 3rd Division, III Marine Amphibious Corps.

Even though 40+ years late, we’re printing this obit in response to information sent in after the October issue. (Ed.)

James I. Edison (Cave Junction ’56)

Marine Lt. James “Jim” Edison was killed October 2, 1961, when his F9F Cougar went over the side while making a landing on the USS Antietam. The carrier was operating in the Gulf of Mexico and the aircraft and Jim were “lost at sea.” Jim starred in football and basketball at Jacksonville (NC) High School and later in basketball at Louisburg College in North Carolina where he graduated in 1958. He jumped at CJ for the 1956 and 1957 seasons.

Even though 40+ years late, we’re printing this obit in response to information sent in after the October issue. (Ed.)

William “Bill” Morin (Missoula ’46)

Bill, 82, died February 21, 2011, in Butte, Montana. He attended the University of Montana in his native Missoula after jumping there in 1946-48. Bill started his work in fire safety as a lookout when he was 15 years old. He hiked to Mann Gulch on a guided tour for the 50th anniversary of the 1949 disaster that killed 13 firefighters, including several of his friends. Bill had a career in sales for more than 50 years, retiring at 72.

Maj. Gen. William “Bill” Eicher (North Cascades ’48)

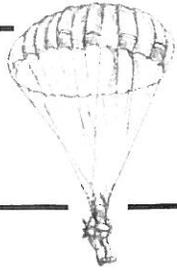
Bill, 84, died May 2, 2011, at Walter Reed Army Medical Center in Washington, D.C., following a highly decorated military career. He jumped from Winthrop for the 1948 season and rejoined the Army in 1950, having served in the Army Air Forces – predecessor to the U.S. Air Force – at the end of World War II. He was a 1950 graduate of Washington State College and earned a Master’s degree in Business Administration from Syracuse University in 1960.

Gen. Eicher commanded a battalion in the Vietnam War and was commanding general of the Army Armament Materiel Readiness Command in the late 1970s. He was inducted into the Ordnance Hall of Fame in 1986, having streamlined a process for ammunition procurement that saved the Army hundreds of millions of dollars. Gen. Eicher received the Silver Star in 1951 while serving as a lieutenant in the Korean War. His award noted that as his platoon attacked a strongly defended hill, he repeatedly braved automatic weapons fire and “so inspired his men by his inflexible resolve that they maintained the perimeter against every hostile thrust.” Gen. Eicher’s other decorations included the Distinguished Service Medal, three awards of the Legion of Merit, four awards of the Bronze Star medal, the Purple Heart, the Joint Services Commendation Medal, and two Army Commendation medals. After retiring from the Army, he spent 12 years as a vice president of technical management at the American Defense Preparedness Association. †

Help The NSA With Your Website Skills

Know your way around a website? Want to contribute to your favorite organization and profession? The National Smokejumper Association is looking for folks with technical and web experience to contribute to smokejumpers.com.

We would welcome HTML, CSS, JavaScript, Graphics, and/or database skills. Additional opportunities exist as well. Contact the Web coordinator at: webmaster@smokejumpers.com with your skills and interest.



ODDS AND ENDS



by Chuck Sheley

Congratulations and thanks to Gene Hamner (MSO-67), Ash Court (NCSB-63), Ken Perkins (RDD-77), and Richard Andrews (RDD-68), who just became our latest Life Member(s).

In talking to my Assistant Editor, Ed Booth, I commented about how I enjoyed the annual pieces that LeRoy Cook (CJ-64) sends in the magazine. We printed "Staying Connected Thanks To Old Memories" in this issue. Ed's comment back: "You're right—his pieces are always excellent and introspective. In a different culture he'd be a spiritual master. Most young people today would think 'connecting' with someone else means sending that person a text message."

Don Baker (MSO-65): "Just finished reading the latest edition of the *Smokejumper* magazine. I liked your listing of the smokejumpers killed while in the military. It is nice to remember them. Here is another one to add to the list. He only jumped the one summer in 1966. We didn't jump any fires together, but he became a good buddy of mine. Maybe because we were both going in the Marine Corps when our jumping was done that summer. "His name is Thomas Jerry Walters (MSO-65). Everyone called him Jerry. He was from Laurel, Mississippi. He was a Corporal and rifleman with E Co., 2nd Bn, 9th Marines, 3rd Marine Division, up near the DMZ in Quang Tri Province. He was KIA on 5/27/1968, and was 24 years old. I always think about him and miss him. RIP Jerry."

At the Cave Junction reunion in June, I was talking with Bill Knight (CJ-60) and his involvement in retrieving Apollo astronauts while being a US Navy helicopter pilot. We then got to wondering if Bill had picked fellow Gobi jumper Stuart Roosa (CJ-53) out of the Pacific. Just heard back from Bill: "Sorry to say it was the Apollo-Soyuz mission that I had contact with. Apollo-Soyuz splashed down July 23, 1975. The USS New Orleans was the primary recovery ship. I was the Chief Pilot on board flying the CH-46 Sea Knight. My mission was to lower swimmers who were to attach floatation equipment on the module.



Then, I backed off while the procedure was completed, then landed back aboard New Orleans."

Ben Musquez (MSO-56): "Thanks again for the honor you gave me and my family to represent all Veterans, especially Smokejumpers (centerfold October *Smokejumper*). All our friends and family

members that have seen the magazine speak highly of the great work you and your team did 'Honoring all Veterans.' Great Job!"

Small World from George Straw (CJ-63): "Once upon a time when we were both younger men, you were working on the Mendocino National Forest and Lyle Laverty was the forest supervisor. Last week (July 2011) I was on a 100-mile horseback ride with Lyle and he noticed the belt buckle you sold me and asked me if I had been a smokejumper and if I knew a guy named 'Chuck Sheley?' He was really floored when I told him I just didn't know you, but was just with you in Cave Junction a couple of weeks ago and bought the buckle from you. Great and very hard ride and Lyle is a really good fellow. We had lots to talk about along the trail; he lost his job with the change in administrations in Washington, so is doing freelance work now."

LeRoy "Lead Hook" Cook (CJ-64): "Enjoyed the Bigfoot article (July 2011 *Smokejumper*) by Major Boddiker (MSO-63). It reminded me of one night in Kirby, Oregon, (Kerby Tavern) with Cliff Hamilton (CJ-62). We were listening to a few forgotten tunes on the juke and a high-heeled Bigfoot came in dressed in bib overall cut offs and an inter-tube top. She and Cliff started jumping around to the mellow tunes and the suds really flowed. This may have been the start of the California west coast swing. Anyway, I got out of there when they started slow dancing to Sara Vaughn's 'Broken Hearted Melody.' I wonder if she was the same young Bigfoot in Mr. Boddiker's article? The Umpqua is just a short walk to the North. Thanks for the memories."

Brian Miller (RDD-85) has been accepted as a Fellow in the American College of Surgeons (FACS). He is also the sole proprietor of Miller's Farm in Dover Foxcroft, Maine. The farm has been critically described as a "tenuous economic endeavor, seemingly established to

provide free range poultry to a burgeoning population of fox." It also features Pie Face, a neo-socialist dwarf dairy goat with a skin problem.

Fred Rohrbach (MSO-65) concerning editorial on smokejumpers KIA: "You missed **Dale H. Haver** (MSO-64) helicopter pilot, died April 11, 1969, Vietnam."

Starr Jenkins (CJ-48): "Thanks for remembering my younger brother, **Hugh Jenkins** (MSO-49), as one of that distinguished list of former smokejumpers who have died in the service over the years."

Jim Edison (CJ-56) also came up as being a smokejumper killed while in the service. He was a Marine pilot killed while making a carrier landing on the Antietam. As with so many names in the NSA database, there is little in the way of detail on the individual. In an email **Ron Price** (CJ-56) added some things that he remembered about Jim: "He was a star basketball player from Jacksonville, NC, and a look-alike for Tab Hunter (actor of the 50s), had 6-2", 200-lb frame and was way ahead of Stockton and Malone with the 'give and go.'" Further information from Louisburg College in N.C. shows he was a 1958 graduate and did play basketball there.

Since the above was entered into this column, **Jim Allen** (NCSB-46) has done a lot of research and emailing over the internet. This resulted in finding Jim's date of death. I have written an obit for this issue and added an obit to our smokejumper records.

Jim Rathbun (MYC-58): "Reference Barry Wynsma's article in this last edition (*Smokejumper* Oct. 2011): Leadership is very necessary and the closer to the ground it is, the better. Forest supervisor offices provide technical and professional skills at a higher level, which are needed to support the ranger districts. You cannot manage the resources by telephone. People need to be in contact with the ground, and that cannot be done from the regional offices. But, the Service isn't managing the resources today, anyway, so it probably doesn't make that much difference. Jim Rathbun, McCall 1958 -1961, Forest Supervisor Kootenai National Forest - retired."

Howard E. "Ed" Usrey (MYC-73): "I jumped one year out of McCall in 1973. It was a great way to wind down from my time in Vietnam. I stayed in the barracks for a couple weeks, while in training, until my wife could come up from California. We used to drink a little beer after a hard day training each day. I would wake up in the morning with a dry mouth and go in to the head to wash my face. I would use **Neil Satterwhite's** (MYC-65) pewter mug to have a big drink of water every morning. Neil almost considered me human, even as a Ned, because I was in Long Range

Recon in Vietnam. Neil was up earlier than me every morning until one morning I woke up before he did. I was going through my morning routine and was going to use his mug to have a big drink of water. I stopped using his mug when I found that he kept his false teeth in it every night. I almost puked in his mug that morning. I'm sure he would have been offended had I done that."

Ron Stoleson (MSO-56): "In response to your article about fallen veteran jumpers, a name that comes to mind is **Robert Gallup** (MSO-54). He was serving in Vietnam as an Air Force pilot. Captain Gallup was killed on June 16, 1965. He was involved in a head on collision with another aircraft while flying an A-1E over Pleiku AB. He bailed out, but his chute did not open. Bob attended the University of Montana Forestry School. **Art Jukkala** (MSO-56) and I last visited him while he was stationed in Wisconsin."

Dick Hughes (MSO-64): "I have noticed that the name **Greg Campbell** (FBX-67) shows up from time to time in the happenings at NSA Newsletter (aka *Smokejumper* magazine). Greg was a rookie in Fairbanks with **Pat Ward** and **Alan Dunton**, among others. I have no official information, but I recall that after the '67 season he was drafted, went to that ridiculous war and got shot dead within two weeks of his arrival. I did advise someone in Fairbanks at the reunion a couple years ago, but still see that he has never been entered into the deceased file. Don't want to kill him prematurely, but have no doubt that if there were not some truth to it, he would have been back in '68 and for that matter, probably forever. He was very much taken with being one of the chosen. Had the energy and enthusiasm of the Brookes. We missed him."

After 39 years in fire, **George Maasen** (RDD-81) is retired. He did just about everything, which included eight years as a smokejumper, 12 years on crews, 10 years on engines and nine years in forest protection and prevention. George worked on six different forests and two different agencies and "loved jumpin" the best. He is looking forward to fishing, hunting, backpacking parts of the Pacific Crest Trail and working with the NSA trail crews. "I don't get it, I can still beat most of the boys to the top of the hill at age 57, but the Forest Service says I can't fight fire anymore and are kicking me out the door." Stay retired George, we need more people like you on the NSA trails projects.

Jim Clatworthy (MSO-56): "Great work on the October 2011 issue of the *Smokejumper*! Chuck Sheley and his associates do a marvelous job getting out the magazine every quarter. The centerfold with the Musquez family was amazing. Ben's always talked to me about all his military family members, but seeing the pictures

makes the point. Stay healthy, Ben, and hope to talk with you soon.”

Bob Hooper (CJ-67): “When I first arrived at the Gobi in 1967, I noticed that the dayroom had photos on the wall. I used to study the photos, wondering where they were from and why they became smokejumpers.

“As for me, my brother was in the 82nd Airborne in North Carolina. I always looked up to him and wanted to do what he did. He was a firefighter with the Calif. Division of Forestry and so was I. I heard about smokejumpers and wondered what it would be like to become one. By chance I met **Chuck Shelley (CJ-59)** who encouraged me to apply, so I did and was accepted.

“I had heard stories about past smokejumpers and one in particular, **Stuart Roosa (CJ-53)**, and looked him up in textbooks about astronauts. At that time I worked as a high school teacher and coach at Marysville High School, in Marysville, Cal-

ifornia. During the winter of 75-76 I was informed that **Stuart Roosa** was going to give a talk about his experiences as an astronaut. After his presentation I spoke with him for about 10 minutes and was able to get a photo and autograph. During my time with Mr. Roosa, I asked him if he would be interested in returning to the Gobi to see how it had changed. He said that he thought it was a good idea and would consider coming for a visit. That summer when he and his family showed up for a tour of the base, he gave us some seeds that went with him on his Apollo 14 mission to the Moon. This was a memorable event and still is to this day.”

Lee Gossett (RDD-57) was inducted into the Oregon Aviation Hall of Honor at the Evergreen Aviation & Space Museum October 16, 2011. The Hall of Honor was established in 2003 to recognize outstanding men and women in aviation. ¶

It's Been Thirty Years Since Women Shattered The Gender Barrier

by **Leo Cromwell** (Idaho City '66)

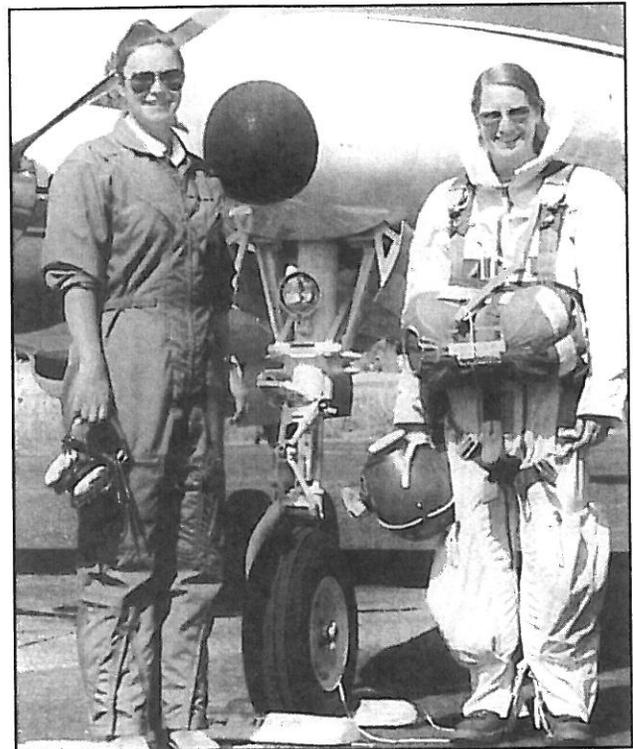
Thirty years ago this fire season was the year of the “first.” The year was 1981 when the first female smokejumper, **Deanne Shulman (MYC-81)**, and the first female smokejumper pilot, **Charlotte Larson**, made great historic significance as they broke the gender barrier into these male-dominated professions.

How the two careers met in smokejumping, and where their illustrious careers went, has been a lifetime accomplishment matched by very few.

Deanne was the first woman on the crew when she started with the Los Padres Hotshots in 1977; one year after women first joined the all-male hotshot crews.

In 1979 she tried out for the McCall Smokejumpers, but was “washed out” of the all-male crew, even though she had passed the extremely rigorous fitness test. Weighing 125 pounds, she did not meet the minimum 130-pound weight requirement codified in the manual at that time. Deanne was not to be denied and, after filing a formal Equal Employment Opportunity complaint, returned in 1981 to try again weighing in at just over 130 pounds.

On July 10, 1981, after passing the physical tests and the parachute training competencies, Deanne



Charlotte Larson and Deanne Shulman “Veterans of the 1985 Season.” (Courtesy Leo Cromwell)

Shulman became the first woman smokejumper. Two years later, Deanne's success was instrumental in a Forest Service review of both the height and weight requirements; with the weight range subsequently changed to 120-200 pounds.

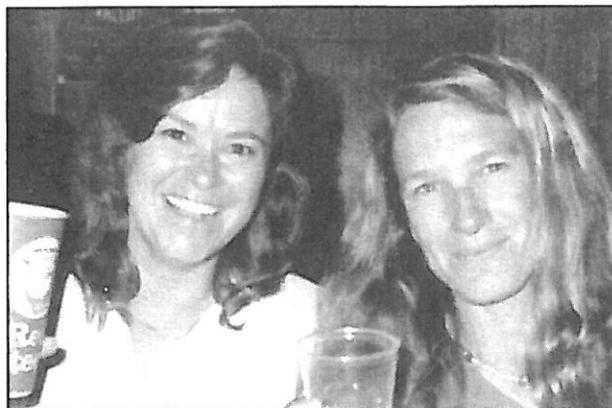
She went on to jump a total of five years through the end of the 1985 season. Deanne's career in the Forest Service continues today where she serves as a Senior Emergency Management Specialist with the Office of International Programs. In this capacity, she has traveled to 25 countries throughout the world, developing and implementing collaborative programs with international partners on all aspects of disaster management.

The same year that Deanne Shulman qualified as a smokejumper, Charlotte Larson flew as co-pilot on the DC-3. Charlotte's interest in flying began in Beach City, Ohio, where she grew up and took her first flight lesson. She made her first flight from a grass airstrip with the guidance of her WWII flight instructor. She eventually left Ohio for California, where she had many jobs and worked her way up from receptionist, secretary, flight school registrar, aircraft sales, VIP pilot, to Flight Operations Manager. During the early years of her career, she was given the nickname Charlie. It was hoped that by the time prospective students or VIP customers scheduled to fly with her found out that "Charlie" was a woman, their shock would last long enough for Charlotte to get them into the airplane. It turned out to be a successful ploy since not one of them refused additional flights, and most of the VIP folks requested her for subsequent trips.

In 1978, Charlotte became a customer pilot training specialist for Beech Aircraft Corporation in Wichita, Kansas. She met and flew with many FS pilots and managers as they took delivery of the Beech Barons for lead plane duty. As a result she was hired in 1980 by Region 4 of the Forest Service and based in Ogden, Utah. By 1983 Charlotte became fully qualified as a jump captain and flew many smokejumper missions in the Beech 99 and Twin Otter. She was primarily based in McCall until 1985/86 when she flew part of the season for the West Yellowstone Smokejumpers.

During 1987 she became the second woman qualified as a lead plane pilot. Mary Barr was the first. In 1990 she accepted the position of National Fixed Wing Specialist for the Washington Office at NIFC in Boise. She became the administrator for the airtanker and lead plane programs as well as the Training Officer for the Modular Airborne Fire Fighting System.

Charlotte retired from the Forest Service in 2002 and lives in Boise. She was an important part of the success of the 2007 National Smokejumper Reunion



Charlotte Larson and Deanne Shulman toast their successful 1981 season. (Courtesy Leo Cromwell)

in Boise and is now on the Board of Directors of the National Smokejumper Association.

Today, women smokejumpers and smokejumper pilots remain a minority, but for those that were around in the early 1980s, it was a great achievement in the world of fire. Many firefighters on the ground were surprised to see the "Lady Smokejumper" as she floated to the earth, picked up her Pulaski and went to work. In the aviation world it was equally a surprise to see a jump plane come in with a "Lady Smokejumper Pilot." Deanne Shulman and Charlotte Larson blazed the path for women 30 years ago this fire season. ♣

Jump List continued from page 13

The Jump List

crybaby.' After teaching him how to hurdle, this young lad went on to be a high school hurdler who never lost a hurdle race in four years of competition, winning the state championship. He also received a full scholarship to Washington State University. You can never predict how a young person may develop and 'turn out.' Throughout a life of teaching and coaching, I have been fortunate to travel to several foreign countries, and I find there is a common 'thirst' by all coaches and athletes alike regarding how to learn the best techniques so athletes can perform at a high level. In the United States we need to initiate a program like the early Civilian Conservation Corps in order to teach young people proper work ethics. The time I spent in the smokejumper program certainly influenced my life in a very positive way, and the individuals whom I met and worked with made an impression upon me that continued to help guide my decisions in times of trials throughout my life. I'd like to hear from other smokejumpers who worked in those districts where I was located. My telephone number is (253) 536-1422." ♣

BOOK REVIEW

THE KILLER INSTINCT

by Carl Gidlund (Missoula '58)
HERE'S A NOVEL that should appeal to fighter pilots, especially those of the Navy persuasion. Every one of them, I'm sure, can identify with the hero of this story, authored by Gary Watts (MYC-64).

The book's setting is the Miramar Naval Air Station in San Diego, and its leading character is Lt. Jason "Jay Bird" Pierce, an instructor pilot teaching new pilots air-to-air combat tactics.

Jay Bird isn't just an ordinary IP, but the epitome of the genre, quite possibly the best pilot and instructor of those assigned to the station.

He's "tall, with military cut brown hair and light blue eyes. The left breast of his short-sleeved khaki shirt dripped with colorful ribbons, most from his exploits during the air war of Desert Storm." He's also rich, the scion of a wealthy ship-owning family, and drives a red Corvette.

It's no surprise that this guy is a chick magnet, but ordinary women need not apply. One leading contender for his favors is Lt. Pauline "Tinker" Bell, a Naval Academy grad and aspiring fighter pilot. She's short, but with a "great body" and is a good stick. As he muses, he reflects that "she's the most beautiful and intelligent woman I've ever known. Why is fraternization with a student forbidden?"

The other leading aspirant is Jay Bird's longtime lady friend Darcy Garr, a "tall, gorgeous" flight attendant who possesses "an athletic hard-body that

would put most centerfolds to shame, and ... long raven hair that looked almost blue in the sunlight."

A tough choice, and naturally it takes many pages for Jay Bird to make it.

While he's deciding, there's a lot going on. Jay Bird must deal with Lt. Jackson "Sinker" Fairbanks, a black pilot with an attitude who apparently doesn't have the skills to fly the airplane but is nursed along because of his race. And neither, it seems, does a second woman in the class, Lt. Martha "Sunshine" Conklin, have the requisite skills.

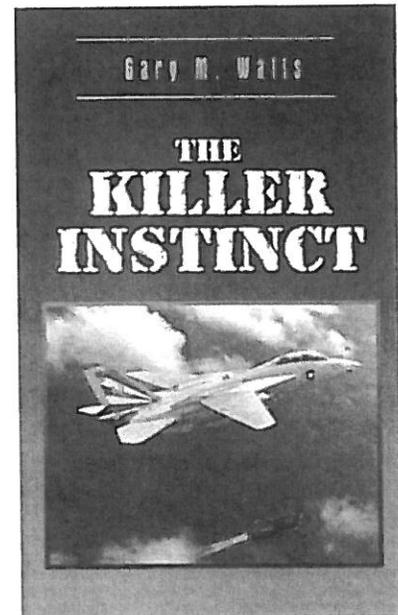
Further, a backseater, "ET" Corvino, just might be gay in a Navy that doesn't countenance that kind of lifestyle. Jay Bird knows about the man's possible proclivities, but what's he to do?

Decisions, decisions.

The book is heavy on technical information related to dogfighting that will probably be understood by fighter pilots, but is a bit confusing to those not of that fraternity.

Watts piles it on as he recounts the mock air battles, describing each critical maneuver in technical detail.

And in the classroom he excels, of course, explaining at one point that "Thrust-to-weight is just that: an aircraft's maximum thrust measured in pounds divided by its gross weight, usually max gross. You have to consider that the thrust-to-weight ratio will increase as fuel is expended. The thrust-to-weight ratio of any fighter is



The Killer Instinct, Gary M. Watts, 307 pp. ISBN: 978-02759666962, \$15.95.

a good indicator of several of its key performance factors: acceleration capability, use of the vertical and maximum sustained G performance."

"God! He's a walking encyclopedia," thinks Tinker Bell.

Will Tinker or Darcy capture Jay Bird's heart? Do Sinker and Sunshine finally garner fighter pilot skills? What about ET? Is he or isn't he—a homosexual?

You'll just have to read the book to find out. It's available through authorhouse.com, buy.com and amazon.com. †

Author Gary Watts was a McCall smokejumper in 1964 and 1965. After graduating from the University of Utah, he qualified in and then flew F-8 Crusaders, F-4 Phantoms and F-14 Tomcats for 20 years, including combat tours in Vietnam. After his Navy career, he flew for a major U.S. airline.

Judge For Yourself: Courson Has Enjoyed A Fabulous Ride

by Kathy Aney

(Copyright 2011, *The East Oregonian*, Pendleton, Ore.)

PENDLETON, Ore.—Richard Courson (CJ-46) is the last man standing.

Every two years, the Pendleton man has traveled to a reunion of smokejumpers from the now-defunct Cave Junction Smokejumper Base. The number of jumpers from his original training class of two men dwindled with each reunion.

This summer, Courson found himself the lone jumper from his training group from 1946. He mingled with smokejumpers from later classes, wondering where all the familiar faces had gone.

Courson, 87, isn't one to flinch at danger. The Marine paratrooper came home from World War II having survived the fierce Battle of Iwo Jima. He returned to Portland and started looking for a job. He had a limited skill set, he said, that included jumping out of airplanes and killing his enemy.

The retired Umatilla County circuit judge has a wit as sharp as a carbon steel knife and a sense of humor dryer than the Sahara.

"I could have gone to Chicago and worked for Capone," Courson added, "but that wasn't real practical."

When he noticed a newspaper ad for Forest Service smokejumpers, Courson applied and got the job.

He learned to parachute Forest Service style, wearing a heavy canvas jump suit with stand-up collar and helmet with open-lattice face protector. He parachuted from Noorduyn Norseman bush planes onto mountainous, rocky terrain of northern California and southern Oregon. The jumpers aimed for trees close to the flames.

"Smokejumpers inevitably got hung up in the timber," Courson said. "You're talking 80-percent slopes with nothing but rocks."

A huge pocket on the right leg of their trousers held 80 feet of coiled rope. Using the rope, the firefighters rappelled from the canopy and started looking for equipment that had free-fallen from the aircraft – cross-cut saws, shovels and pulaskis, double-edged tools with an ax on one side and an adze for digging on the other. The firefighters communicated with the pilot using surplus World War II radios.

"The darned things usually wouldn't work," he said. "The pilot would have to throw notes out of the plane.

There was a lot of waving. It was really clumsy."

Radios are better now, but "not much has really changed," said Bill Selby (RAC-91), smokejumper program manager at the Redmond Air Center. Kevlar has replaced canvas, he said, but jumpsuits have the same design. Modern jumpers use GPS units and chain saws, he said. Ropes are made from tubular nylon, instead of natural fibers. Tools have their own chutes.

The Redmond Smokejumper Base opened in 1964, consolidating jumpers from Cave Junction and North Cascades. (*Six jumpers from each base went to Redmond that first year, though each base continued to operate independently. – Ed.*)

When Courson started jumping, the practice of delivering firefighters by air was in its infancy. The Forest Service deployed its first smokejumpers in 1940 on a fire in Idaho's Nez Perce National Forest.

When Courson started jumping, the practice of delivering firefighters by air was in its infancy. The Forest Service deployed its first smokejumpers in 1940 on a fire in Idaho's Nez Perce National Forest.

After two fire seasons, Courson became a spotter. That meant he lay on his stomach on the plane's floor and called the shots. From that vantage point, he could signal both the pilot and the jumper perched in the doorway. After gauging the timber, wind drift and possible landing sites, he motioned the pilot to slow down and patted the jumper on his back to go.

He watched the first man land, then made his own jump.

Other than bruises and scrapes, Courson sustained only one injury in five years of smokejumping. The bad sprain came after parachuting over Crater Lake. Tourists watched wide-eyed as he floated to a small lightning-caused fire about a mile from the water. His ankle twisted painfully in deep gravel upon landing.

The jumpers shared solid bonds forged during their battles against flame. They worked hard, jumping into precarious spots, scratching fireline, and hiking miles carrying heavy equipment. Courson remembers hives of angry bees and even a bear that scattered embers outside a fireline where they restarted the blaze.

His fellow jumpers eventually scattered to the winds. Courson left smokejumping after five years and entered law school. He settled in Pendleton, working as an attorney

from his Court Avenue office and later becoming Umatilla County district attorney. Ultimately, Gov. Tom McCall appointed Courson to the bench, where he stayed for 25 years.

Despite a frenetic schedule, he took time to attend jumper reunions every couple of years. Over time, his original band of brothers faded away, but not the bonds forged while battling wildfire and floating toward flame.

Courson said, "I always felt closer to them than fraternity brothers." †

The Dangers Of A Widow-Maker Snag

by Ross Parry (Missoula '58)

I was assigned to be the leader and trainer of the first hotshot crew from the Nez Perce National Forest in 1962. As their leader, I was more or less responsible for their "well-being" – facilities, showers, meals, etc.

Our location was to be the old, abandoned Adams Ranger Station, which was in a remote area out of Grangeville, Idaho. This location was within the boundaries of the State Creek Ranger District. Consequently, the ranger of that district was very influential and personally dedicated to rehabilitating the various buildings of our assigned location. I don't remember his name but he was a good one.

Since we were located at the old Adams Ranger Station, we called ourselves the Adams Hotshots. As the leader of these young men, I was expected to train them in firefighting techniques, provide transportation to fires, and lead them as crew boss on fires. We had a good crew of 33 men, and they were hotshots.

Ron Stoleson (MSO-56) had organized the first "hotshot" crew out of Missoula in 1961. They were known as the Nine-Mile Hotshots. Lyle Brown (MSO-54) was assigned to be their leader and crew boss the following year.

During the 1962 fire season, the Adams Hotshots had been on a few fires, and I personally feel they had done well – very well.

In midsummer 1962, the Adams Hotshots and the Nine-Mile Hotshots were assigned to the same fire on the Salmon River area in Idaho. Herb Oertli (MSO-48), a former smokejumper, was sector boss on the fire.

Whether it was accidental or by design, the Adams Hotshots and the Nine-Mile Hotshots were assigned to be working together in Herb's sector – but maybe it wasn't accidental because Herb knew both Lyle Brown and me personally.

The next morning, the two hotshot crews started

working together building lines. During that day, we built one heck of a bunch of line (not yards, but miles). At the end of the day, Herb came to lead us back to base camp. Man, we were ready. We were tired.

Herb started walking at a steady, slow pace, and it was mostly uphill, but he never stopped for a break. He just kept going, and going, like the Energizer bunny.

Finally, at the top of a ridge leading directly down to base camp, Herb stopped for a break. At the top of that ridge, there was a huge snag on fire. This snag was within controlled fire lines and not a threat to fire containment, but it was burning clear to the top, where limbs were being burned and sparks blown over the area.

The area around this snag was kind of like an amphitheater, and consequently, more than 60 firefighters were sitting around the snag taking a break – finally.

Apparently, Lyle decided that this was a great opportunity to teach a safety lesson. He went down to the base of that snag and walked around it.

He pointed up at the limbs on fire and he shouted out, "This is a widow-maker; those limbs could break loose at any time and without a sound could come down and injure or kill a person below. Therefore, anytime you need to do anything under one of these snags, you must place a lookout to watch and warn of any falling limbs."

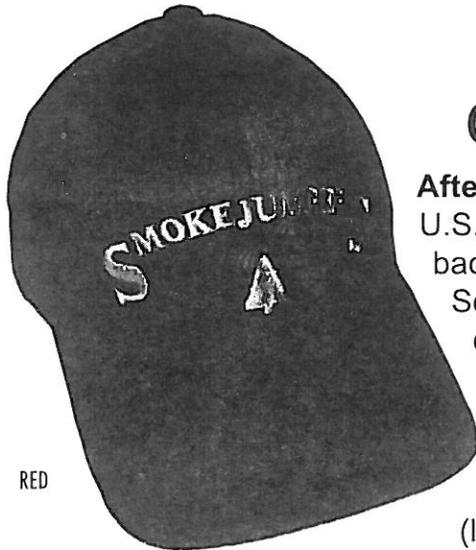
At that exact time, a limb fell from that snag and hit Lyle across his shoulder and helmet. It knocked Lyle ass-over-teakettle about 15 feet down the hill. I don't believe he lost his footing.

His helmet was about 30 feet down the hill. Fortunately, the limb was relatively small. There was not a single warning shout from any of the more than 60 observers. It happened too quickly.

Lyle Brown gave his all to teach a lesson and that lesson will stick. What a man! †

There's never a better way to show your pride than with Smokejumper merchandise

Our NEWEST caps ... where style and comfort make them real winners!



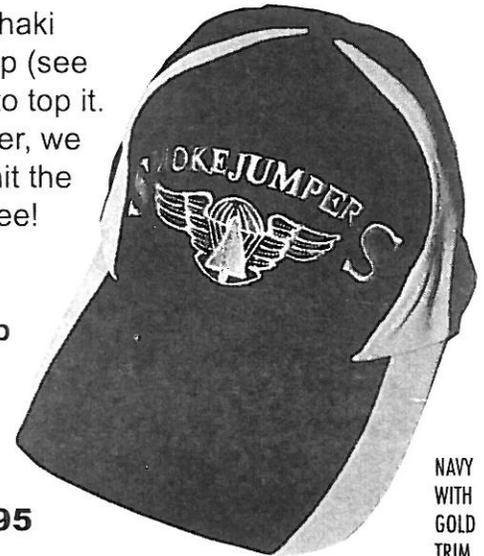
RED

After the incredible success of our khaki U.S. Forest Service Smokejumpers cap (see back of this page), we decided to try to top it. So with the help of a graphic designer, we came up with a design that really hit the jackpot! And we're sure you'll agree!

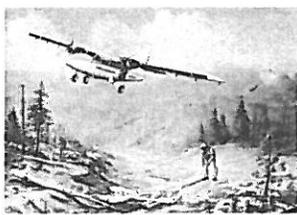
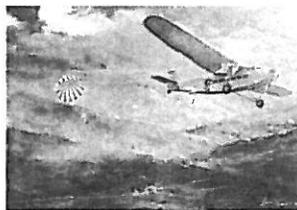
Stylized "SMOKEJUMPERS" embroidery adorns our red cap (left) with mesh body and FlexFit headband for superior comfort ... and our

navy blue cap (right) with Velcro strap and silky-smooth body with gold trim. Looking for a new favorite? Order one – or both – today!

\$19.95



NAVY WITH GOLD TRIM



Beauty of Christmas shines through in these cards

Masterfully created by artists Bruce Ford and Larry Janoff, these full-color cards depict jumping scenes with varying aircraft

over the decades. Inside image on each card depicts a pulaski with its blade in a stump with "Merry Xmas" at the stump's base. Each set comes with matching envelopes.

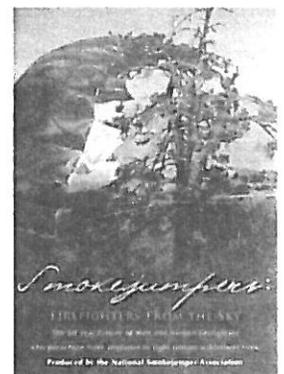
12 cards – \$8 • 16 cards – \$10 • 24 cards – \$15

"SMOKEJUMPERS: FIREFIGHTERS FROM THE SKY" DVD

This is the definitive record of smokejumping, featuring 120 minutes of history from 1939 to 2000. Footage and action shots filmed at current bases and in the field. This video is the result of the most ambitious NSA project to date after requiring two years to produce.

• Get your copy today – just \$15 •

"'Smokejumpers: Firefighters From the Sky' arrived in the mail today and I just finished viewing it. It is a truly great video – should win some sort of an Oscar. The footage and the editing is marvelous. I was amazed to see coverage of the Eight Mile Ridge Crash. It was such an impressive and professional piece of work that I just had to tell someone." – William Eastman (NCSB-54)



There's much more on the back of this page!

You've been framed!

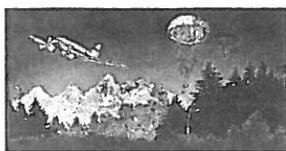
Top of frame reads "Jumpin' Fires" while the bottom reads "Smokejumpers." Black with white lettering. At this price, you can buy two for each of your vehicles, and save!



\$4 each, or two for \$7

Our best-selling cap ... ever!

Soft, luxurious cotton twill khaki body and expertly embroidered logo join its forest green "sandwich"-style bill and brass buckle. Perfect for camping, yard work or around town. These baseball caps are hugely popular with NSA members. Get yours today and find out why! **\$15.95**



STYLISH T-SHIRT BACK IN STOCK

It took a while, but we were finally able to get another batch of these shirts after the overwhelming response that quickly emptied our shelves! As before, shirt features jumping action on the back with "SMOKEJUMPERS" on the front in stylized font. Hazy royal blue (M, L, XL, XXL) with short sleeves. **\$16**



Join the crew

The NSA's Trail Maintenance Program popularity is growing each year ... and it now has its own line of apparel! This blue cap has an unusual yet attractive knit weave, and features program logo of parachute, pulaski and cross-cut saw. **\$5**



Pin up your pride

NSA pin looks great on a sport coat, jacket or a cap. Double-post fasteners make sure it stays secure. Shiny chrome finish. **\$2.50**



A moving tribute

"Cold Missouri Waters" DVD offers a song by The Fiddlin' Foresters, memorializing the 1949 Mann Gulch Fire that killed 12 smokejumpers and a firefighter. **\$3**

'Remember the Fallen' pin Solemn tribute to jumpers who've lost their lives over the decades. Pin has a looped "ribbon" design. **\$1.50**



• Order form •

Item	What color? (if applicable)**	What size? (if applicable)**	How many?	Total cost
"Smokejumpers: Firefighters From the Sky" DVD				
Christmas cards (specify 12-, 16- or 24-card set)				
Stylized "Smokejumpers" cap				
U.S. Forest Service Smokejumpers twill cap				
Stylized "Smokejumpers" t-shirt				
NSA Trail Maintenance Program cap				
License plate frame				
"Cold Missouri Waters" DVD				
NSA logo lapel pin				
"Remember the Fallen" lapel pin				
Subtotal – add the total cost from the items				
Shipping – \$3.95 for the first item; \$1.50 for each additional item				
GRAND TOTAL				

**** PLEASE NOTE: If we don't have the item you request, we'll substitute an item of equal value in a different color but in the same size.**

Shipping information ...

Name _____
 Mailing address _____
 City, State, ZIP _____
 Telephone _____ E-mail _____

Payment information ...

Check
 Money order

Please make your check or money order payable to **NSA**

Mail this sheet to: NSA Merchandise • P.O. Box 16 • Chico, CA • 95927