

THE STATIC LINE

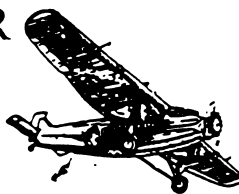
NATIONAL SMOKEJUMPER
ASSOCIATION

P.O. BOX 4081

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THE STATIC LINE

The Static Line Staff

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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Please note the ballot included in one of the inserts in this issue. There are six nominees who have been nominated to serve three-year terms on your N.S.A. Board of Directors. Note too, the introductory statement regarding the number of votes needed to make this a valid election. Please participate in the election--VOTE!

I believe after you have read the biographical sketches of each candidate, you will be impressed with the caliber of those wishing to become involved in the governance of our Association. Each has indicated a great desire to make our N.S.A. even better than it already is. I know they will do so if given the opportunity. They deserve your vote!

The Board of Directors met in its regular annual session on Friday, April 4th, 1997 at the Missoula Smokejumper Base. Twelve of our sixteen Directors were able to attend. A number of things were discussed and decided on. A more complete report will be written for the July newsletter. One item on the agenda concerned Life Memberships. We now have eleven individuals who have become Life Members. Several others have indicated an interest in doing so later. The Life Membership program began in an effort to raise \$11,000 as part of our share in the Alliance formed with the National Forest Service Museum. We have accomplished that goal. Other uses of the funds received from Life Memberships will vary, but will include the procurement of equipment; purchase of museum artifacts; as well as money for the museum

itself. Elsewhere in this newsletter you will find that a copy of the Ruana Knife, reported to have been used on early reserve chutes, will be given, along with a plaque, to those who join the Association for Life.

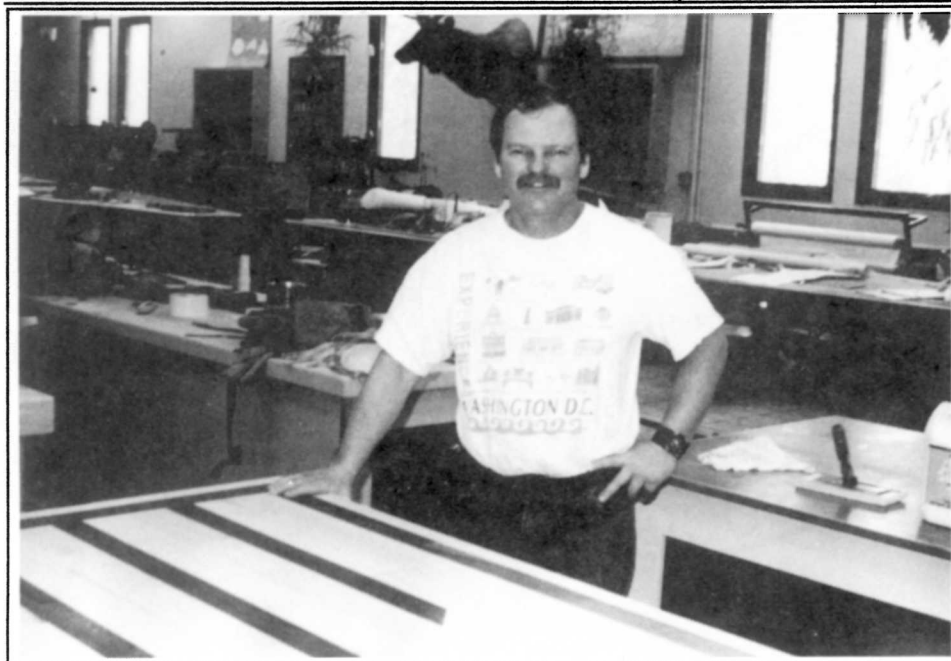
Congratulations to the newly elected officers of the N.S.A. Executive Committee. They are: Laird Robinson, President; Larry Anderson, First Vice-President; Lowell Hanson, Treasurer; and Phil Davis, Secretary. Jack Demmons continues as Editor-Compiler of the newsletter and as a member of the Board of Directors. The newly elected Executive Committee will begin its tenure in office July 1, 1997.

In closing, in this last letter to you as President of your Association, I want to thank you, the membership, for making my stay on the Board an exciting, challenging and very rewarding one. I leave with a very positive feeling for our N.S.A. We continue to get quality leadership in terms of new Board members, and these individuals are the ones who will take the Association to new heights with their energy and new ideas. But, they will need your continued support, because it is an active membership that keeps the N.S.A. strong and moving forward. Thank you again. It has been a great experience!

Best regards,



Ed Courtney
President



Thomas "Otto" Carlsen, MSO '70, currently Assistant Foreman for Training at the Missoula base, standing by one of four packing tables he refurbished this winter in the loft. (Tables are basically used for packing and repairing parachutes.)

Photo credit: Jack Demmons



NEW MEMBERS

Note: This listing of new members includes those who joined between January 10, 1997 and April 16th, 1997. Those who joined after April 16th will be mentioned in the 16th Newsletter, which will be mailed out late in July 1997. Should names be misspelled, or addresses be incorrect or changed, please let us know as soon as possible.

NAME	ADDRESS	BASE	1ST YEAR
Aschim, John A.	2827 Neals LN, #21, Vancouver, WA 98661-5173	RAC	77
Bate, George D.	942 E.1050 N, Ogden, UT 84404	MYC	46
Boundy, Gilbert H.	3865 Green Briar RD, Batavia, OH 45103	CJ	61
Bowman, Michael R.	PO Box 9307, Moscow, ID 83843	NCSB	54
Boyer, Paul	1738 Alder LN, Toledo, OR 97391	CJ	60
Chambers, Fred	139 Larvel, Gatlinburg, TN 37738	MSO	65
Clemensen, Charles	1512 E. Washington AV, Santa Ana, CA 92701	CJ	48
Cuplin, Dave	3001 E. Adams AV, Cudahy, WY 53110	MSO	48
Fort, Richard	PO Box 18031, Ashville, NC 28814	AK	80
Gardner, Dale G.	47728 W. 1st, Oakridge, OR 97463	CJ	67
Henry, Edward "Andy"	1192 3rd ST, Los Osos, CA 93402	MSO	?
King, Lowell D.	4956 Castle CT, Anchorage, AK 99508	MSO	57
Kohloff, Michael E.	3122 SW Diane DR, Lake Oswego, OR 97035	MYC	64
Longanecker, Dean M.	123 W. Ash, Waterville, WA 98858	NCSB	68
Marshall, Curtis A.	PO Box 178, Portula, CA 96122	RDD	68
Maryott, Douglas B.	296 E. Hanley, Couer d'Alene, ID 83814	MSO	71
McMahon, John P.	17923 Brittany DR, SW, Seattle, WA 98166	MSO	58
Miller, Robert E.	16713 Hampton RD, Williamsport, MD 21795	MSO	61
Nicol, Joe	718 N 4th ST, Hamilton, MT 59840	MSO	80
Peterson, Gary A.	3218 Lake Stream, Kingwood, TX 77339	NCSB	75
Price, Ronald	7402 SW Pointer RD, Portland, OR 97225	CJ	56
Rau, Ralph	136 Spring ST, Russellville, AL 35653	RAC	86
Richards, Kenneth B.	762 Owens Store RD, Canton, GA 30115	Associate, FMO	
Scicek, John	10140 SE Sedgwick, Port Orchard, WA 98367	MSO	48
Seigrist, Connie W.	811 N. Camino Alto, Vallejo, CA 94589	Associate-Pilot	
Sutton, David L.	2070 SW 52nd Way, Plantation, FL 33317	MSO	60
Tabler, Michael R.	111 Crest DR, Ephrata, WA 98823	NCSB	67
Taylor, Tim	2220 W. Wildwood CT, Sierra Vista, AZ 85635	MSO	60
Tullis, Keith	1073 La Mesa, Chico, CA 95926	CJ	66
Waldron, Mike "Gizmo"	248A N. Higgins AV, Apt. 345, Missoula, MT 59802	MSO	88
Webber, Robert	1800 N. Cole, Suite #308, Boise, ID 83703	MSO	62
Wheelock, Michael	P.O. Box 838, Merlin, OR 97532	CJ	76

N.S.A. LIFE MEMBERSHIPS

Since the January 1997 newsletter, we have had eleven Life Memberships. Six were named in that newsletter:



Fred O. Brauer, MSO '41; Charles (Chuck) Fricke, MSO '61; Joseph (Joe) J. Gutkoski, MSO '50; Tom Kovalicky, MSO '61; Michael (Mike) D. McCullough, MSO '56; and Robert (Bob) Quillin, FBX '71. The latest five are: Dave Cuplin, MSO '48, Jim Murphy, MSO '48; Fred Rohrbach, MSO '65; and Maynard Rost, MSO '58. The fifth one does not want to be identified until his current 10-year membership expires.

Ken Morris, one of our Associate members and a former member of the U.S.A.F. 12th Rescue Squadron, drew this sketch of an AN-2 Russian smokejumper aircraft. Mongolian jumpers use them also. They are powered by a 1,000 h.p. ASH-62 IR engine.

DECEASED JUMPERS AND PILOTS

The names shown below are new to the N.S.A. Obituary Listing. Should dates and other material not be correct, please let us know. If you submitted information for the Obituary and it is not shown, please contact us. Members have been very helpful with this information. In the January 1997 newsletter we mentioned that Effie Brown, who was a former cook for the Missoula smokejumpers, was living in northwestern Montana. Al Hammond, MSO '46, sent us a message by e-mail, stating that Effie is deceased and buried at the Sunset Memorial Cemetery in Missoula.

NAME	BASE	YEAR	COMMENTS
Abate, James "Jim"	MYC	53	Jim died from a heart attack November 11, 1977 at Clearfield, Utah. His widow sent us that information.
Daugherty, Pat	Pendleton	47	Pat died at San Diego Dec. 30, 1996 after being severely injured in a vehicle accident. He was a former 11th Airborne Division paratrooper, who won the 11th Abn. Div. Assoc.'s "Trooper of the Year" award on July 15, 1996. Pat had been the Quartermaster for the Association many years. After leaving military service in 1947 he joined the Forest Service at Missoula and worked as a smokejumper. In 1950 he joined the U.S. Air Force and became a tail-gunner on B-29 heavy bombers and flew 41 missions over North Korea. He is survived by his wife Liz. Carl Joe Wilson, MSO '52, a former WWII paratrooper with the 11th Airborne, sent us this information.
Fitzjarrold, Jack A.	NCSB	62	Jack passed away at Wenatchee, Washington November 19, 1996. He was born at Mackay, Idaho December 31, 1933. He joined the U.S.A.F. in 1951 and served during the Korean War. After leaving military service he became a smokejumper, first at Winthrop and later at Redmond. Jim retired in 1990 and moved to Wenatchee Heights. One of his sisters, Linda, is married to Larry Lufkin. Jack's two brothers, Don and Keith, were also smokejumpers out of Winthrop. Bill Moody, NCSB '57, gave us this information.
Heare, Ken	MSO	79	Ken passed away February 3, 1997 in Missoula at the age of 42. He was born June 3, 1954 at Coulee Dam, Washington. He was an active Missoula jumper who fought a battle with brain cancer. Ken did much to improve safety conditions for the Missoula jumpers and was involved with the new ankle braces jumpers have been using. His empty chair at the loft is highly visible. He is deeply missed.
Iten, George J.	MSO	44	George passed away in 1955. Wilmer "Bill" Carlsen dropped that information off with us.
Kester, Bob	CJ	55	Bob died in the crash of his Marine Corps F8U fighter some years ago. Harold "Max" Maxwell, CJ '55, and a former Navy fighter pilot, gave us this information. We will follow up on details concerning Bob's death.
Post, Rex H.	MSO	51?	In our search for missing jumpers and pilots we came across a Rex W. Post living in Seattle. He said his father was Rex H. Post, who died about 26 years ago. We will follow up on Rex's death.
Scholz, Edward G.			Ed was a smokejumper pilot for many years. The "Pacific Northwest Forest Service Newsletter" said he passed away Jan. 16, 1997 at the age of 79 at Davis, California. He was born June 19, 1917 in Bridgeport, Connecticut. His lifetime career in aviation began with the Army Air Corps during WWII. From 1946-1948 Ed was the owner and manager of the Grants Pass, Oregon airport. As a smokejumper pilot he flew jumpers primarily out of Cave Junction, but also flew the Noorduyn Norseman elsewhere, as at Deming and Silver City, New Mexico. He retired in 1972 as National Air Safety Officer and Deputy Air Operations Officer in the WO. His wife, Ann Elizabeth "Betty", lives at Davis. Delos Dutton, MSO '51, sent us this information. Delos said, "Ed was a very good smokejumper pilot and very good to work with. He helped set up the Region 8 (Southern Region) smokejumper detail when he was the Air Operations officer for that region." Delos flew with Ed around the Appalachian Mountains and was with Region 6 jumpers who were stationed at Wise, Virginia during several spring fire seasons in the early 1970's.

Bob Hubble, MSO '91, gave the N.S.A. his Web page several months ago. It includes more than 110 pages of material relating to smokejumping. It is very professionally done. Currently, a N.S.A. committee is editing the Web page and it will be back on line shortly. The address will be: <http://www.marsweb.com/~smokejumpers>. In an effort to keep our Web site information up to date and interesting, material will be added on a continual basis. Bob was given a 10-year membership in the N.S.A. for his donation. A reminder: our e-mail address is: smokejumpers@marsweb.com. We have been receiving much e-mail. Keep those letters coming!

AIR TANKER DEATHS

NAME

SITUATIONS

George Carey, pilot and J.C. Brehm, copilot, died when their B-25 retardant bomber crashed in the Beaver Lake area of the Okanogan N.F. while on a retardant run July 27, 1960. (Information was received from Bill Moody. George Carey was the uncle of Sandy Moody, Bill's wife.)

Larry Englert, pilot and "Corby" Corbert, copilot, perished when their B-25 retardant bomber crashed on the Wallowa Whitman - Anthony Lakes Fire around July 20, 1960, south of La Grande, Oregon in the Elkhorn Mountains. (Bill Moody, Winthrop, Washington, Eldon Down, Eagle, Idaho, and Wally Tower, Salem, Oregon, passed this information on to us.)

Dennis Conner, pilot and Richard Ray, copilot, were killed in the Los Padres N.F. of California in July 1979 while on a retardant run in a Fairchild C-119. One wing came off, outboard of the right engine, and slashed the tail section (Tanker 3).

Lou Remsehnar, pilot and Ted Sveum, copilot, were killed when their C-119 went down in the Palmdale area of Southern California on July 19, 1981. While on a retardant run a wing came off (Tanker 88).

Bill Berg, pilot, and Charles Peterson, copilot, and Steven Harrell, mechanic, died when their C-119 slammed into the ground in the Redding, California area September 16, 1987 after losing a wing (Tanker 87). This spelled the end of the use of C-119's as retardant bombers.

The above information on the C-119's came to us from Cecil Stinson, Redding Air Tanker Base Specialist.

WILMER "BILL" CARLSEN, MSO '43



Wilmer "Bill" Carlsen at the old dirt airstrip at Seeley Lake, NW of Missoula in 1943, preparing for a training jump. On the left side of picture, from left to right: Ellis Roberts; Bob Derry; and Bill Wood (in hat). On the far right side of the picture sitting on the rail fence, left to right: Emory Garber; and Herbert Crocker. This was the first year for all of these Jumpers. Bill lives at Polson, MT. Our last address for Ellis was at Washington, D.C. Bob is at East Wenatchee, WA. (He is a brother of Frank, Chet and Virgil - Each of the three is deceased.) Bill lives in Beaverton, OR. We do not know where Emory is at. Herb is deceased. Photo courtesy of Bill Carlsen.



Ken Morris' sketch of a jumper performing a let down. Ken is an Associate member and a former member of the 12th Rescue Squadron.

“A HOUSE JUMP” ~ Joe Gutkoski, MSO ‘50

During September 1951, the fall rains began and Fred Brauer had the unpleasant job of telling us hangers-on that we were terminated. This was a sad time for dyed-in-the-wool jumpers. No more paychecks and no more food. We had to get out of our barracks at Fort Missoula and face the daunting prospect of looking for legitimate jobs with the wind, rain and wet snow in our faces.

I had purchased a backpack and chestpack (WWII vintage) from loft foreman Glen (Smitty) Smith for \$100.00. Smitty also threw into the deal a soft leather pilot's helmet and a quick course in parachute rigging.

Much free-falling was done by smokejumpers in those days. Jack Knott and Dave Burt, both riggers, and Stan Sykes were the premier jumpers. They used two chestpacks, and a backpack. They would crack the top chestpack, float under the canopy for a few seconds so those on the ground could see them then release one of the risers, creating a streamer. They would then break away from the streamer and fall free for about 1,000 feet before cracking the backpack, and then landing.

Unfortunately, I aspired to be one of them. Little was known about a spread-eagle position, although we knew the German paratroopers used it during their static line jumps. A free fall usually resulted in a head down position, a tumble or a flat spin, which were not the best opening positions. A French jumper was experimenting with a balsa wood wing, but he needed the large door of a Douglas C-47 to get out of the plane. I later heard he was killed while experimenting with one of his contraptions.

At the time of my first free fall, the Forest Service had recently restricted smokejumpers from free-falling while on the payroll. Officials were suspicious of previously sprained ankles and hairline fractures that were blamed on fire jumps.

I asked squad leader Gar Thorsrud to spot me over Hale Field near Missoula, then site of Johnson Flying Service and now the location of Missoula County Sentinel High School, Vo-Tech and Adult Education facilities. It was a Friday afternoon around 5 P.M. and my last day on the Forest Service payroll. I hired one of Bob Johnson's old Travel Air's. Gar and I took off with the pilot. I wanted Gar to drop me at 2,000 feet, and I would delay opening for 1,000 feet. Gar tossed out a drift chute at opening altitude to see what the ground wind was doing, and then we climbed to 2,000 feet for

the spotting run. A brisk ground wind was blowing so Gar gave me a good lead for a 1,000 feet opening. I had a lot of fear when I sat in the door (no step) and slid my backside toward the edge, with my legs dangling outside, so that, with a little nudge, I would



1952 at the Nine Mile airstrip near Camp Menard, twenty miles west of Missoula. Left to Right: Dick "Carp" Carpenter, MSO '49, living at Dillon, Montana; Al Casieri - "Wild Al," MSO '52, currently at Arlington, Virginia; Joe Gutkoski; and Norm Allen, MSO '46, residing near Thompson Falls, Montana. Photo courtesy of Joe Gutkoski.

be out and clear of the plane.

Two thousand feet seemed very high from what I was used to during practice and fire jumps.

The moment came, and Gar said "Go!" Away I went and didn't fall very far (chickened out) before I looked down at my rip cord handle, then reached up and pulled it. The opening was hard and just about jerked me in two. I checked to see if my anus and intestines were still intact. I then looked up at my fully deployed canopy and breathed a sigh of relief. So far so good. I faced into the strong wind and did not become alarmed until I realized I was being blown across the airport and towards the blocks of homes east of Hale Field. I told myself, "You did not delay the opening long enough, you dumb bastard." Soon, I was drifting over one block of houses, and looking backwards under my right armpit, saw a power line coming up.

At that point, I turned the canopy, facing the direction I was being blown and drifted over the power line. Then I noticed a big picture window ahead of me, coming up fast. Luckily, I missed it and landed on the roof of the house, hitting it hard, with my head snapping forward and down onto the sloping roof. I was dressed in a sweatshirt, black jeans and the thin

"A HOUSE JUMP" ~ Joe Gutkoski, MSO '50

cont'd from page 6

pilot's helmet. The canopy filled with air and dragged me over the roof ridgeline and down over the other side, where I came plunging off the roof and onto the concrete driveway below.

A lady opened the kitchen door, took one look and ducked back into the house. She soon reappeared with a glass of water, and I gladly took a drink. I needed it! She was a very perceptive lady. Her husband stepped out, looking for the plane crash after hearing the loud thump on his roof. He thought I had bailed out of a stricken aircraft. My pilot's helmet was still on. At about that time, my handlers showed up with a vehicle and got me out of there before I was sued for roof damage.

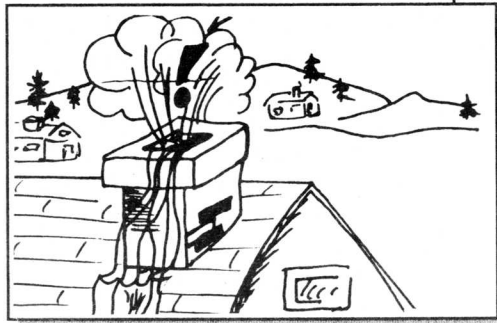
I went undercover in Denny Swift's and Dave Owen's apartment to heal my bruises, then left Missoula for Oregon in my 1935 Chevy and found a job as a brakeman on the Union Pacific Railroad out of La Grande. This was prior to the establishment of a smokejumper base there.

I fell in love with a Mormon girl in La Grande, and since she thought parachutes were neat, almost married her. She worked for her Dad at a restaurant.

In the spring of 1952 I went back to smokejumping, was detailed to Deming, New Mexico and then returned to Missoula in July. It was a good fire season and I made 15 fire jumps that year.

Joe lives with his wife Milly at Bozeman, Montana in the "Land of the Lonesome Coyotes." She was once a nurse at St. Patrick's Hospital in Missoula. He was a landscape architect for the Forest Service and retired in 1982. Joe received a B.S. in Landscape Architecture at Pennsylvania State University. He served in the U.S. Navy on the Destroyer Lundsdowne DD486 during 1945 and 1946. Joe was a smokejumper from 1950 through 1962.

Gar lives in Tucson. Dave Burt, Glen (Smitty) Smith and Stan Sykes are deceased. We don't know where Jacob Knott is located. Please let us know if any of you do. Dave Owen and Denny Swift live in Kalispell, Montana.



Luckily this did not happen to Joe, but could have!



Wattay Airport Vientiane, Laos, 1961. Pictured are former McCall, Idaho smokejumpers.

They were three of the first C-123 Air America cargo kickers in Laos. Left to Right: Richard "Pete" Peterson, '47; Miles Johnson, '53; and his brother Thomas "Shep" Johnson, '56. Pete lives at Weiser, Idaho, 40 miles northwest of Boise. Miles is currently moving from McCall to Boise and Shep resides at Vale, Oregon, 60 miles northwest of Boise.

Photo courtesy of Miles Johnson.

We are exchanging newsletters with the Air America Association and the Pararescue Association.

“MISSED FLIGHT” ~ Ralph Johnston, RDD ‘63

During July 1959, Ralph was on detail in Region 1, working out of Missoula as technical director on the first helicopter training film. The Washington, D.C. office advised him and Elmer Bloom, U.S.F.S. Cameraman and filmmaker based at Missoula, that footage was needed for scenes in an airliner film that was to be produced later that year.

Ralph said, “We had finished filming the helicopter scenes late in July and then waited for a flight on one of Bob Johnson’s Tri-motors that was scheduled to fly into the Moose Creek dirt airstrip in the Nez Perce National Forest after several days of cancelled flights.” I decided it was not necessary for me to go along on that flight. Elmer was very capable of identifying and filming Tri-motor landings at a remote airstrip.

“I returned to the Angeles National Forest in Southern California north of Los Angeles. A week later I received a copy of the Missoula paper from Elmer, with headlines telling of a fatal Tri-motor crash at Moose Creek August 4, 1959.”

Elmer said, “At the last minute I was cancelled from the flight due to space and weight limitations. Needless to say, that was one flight I’m glad I missed.”

In our fifth newsletter, dated October 1994, we mentioned that crash. The Tri-motor, with Bob Culver at the controls, on a flight to the Moose Creek strip from Grangeville, Idaho, hit some trees while landing. NC 8419 caught fire and as a result, two

smokejumpers, Gary Williams, MSO ‘58 and John Rolf, MSO ‘57, died from burns, as did Alva Blackerby, the Nez Perce forest supervisor, who was riding in the copilot’s position. Ron Stoleson, MSO ‘56, was the squadleader and sitting in the cabin of the plane. He would have been in the copilot’s position if Blackerby had not been along.

Ron received serious burns and was rushed to a hospital in Grangeville. He currently is with the Forest Service in Ogden. Bob Culver passed away in the Flathead Valley north of Missoula on August 20, 1985. NC 8419 was a model 5-AT (larger than the 4-AT’s) and was the 58th 5-AT produced. It was delivered to the Ford Tri-motor company at Dearborn, Michigan on June 29, 1929. The plane went on to serve with Northwest Airways, and then with four different airlines in Alaska. From there it went to Monroe Airways, Monroe, Michigan and then to G&G Airlines, Tucson. Bob Johnson bought it on June 5, 1951, and NC 8419 was leased to Northwest Airlines for a commemorative flight in 1956. Parts of it and pieces from several other Tri-motors were made into one plane and that ship carries the same designation, NC 8419.

Kal Aero at Kalamazoo purchased the registration plate of NC 8419 and parts from Evergreen Helicopters, McMinnville, Oregon April 13, 1979.

Penn Stohr Jr. flew the rebuilt plane on its first flight on July 15, 1991.

It now flies out of Kalamazoo, Michigan almost daily each summer and is part of the Kalamazoo Aviation History Museum.

Ralph Johnston trained at Redding in 1963. He suffered severe injuries during his 7th jump - a timber jump. He fell out of a 110’ fir tree while preparing for a let down, breaking his left leg and chipping a bone in his right foot. The injuries finished his smokejumping career, but he went on to helicopter operations in the U.S.F.S from there. Ralph resides at Boise.



Tri-motor NC 8419 crash at Moose Creek airstrip 8/4/59. Photo courtesy of Rod Snider, NCSB ‘51.

SILK STORIES: Fractured Fables From the Fireline

by Scott Belknap, MYC 83, and Now An Active Missoula Jumper

"The summer of fire and ice," is the way Missoula Jumper Dennis Lehfeltdt remembers 1966. Denny was based at the West Yellowstone center for his second year of jumping. It was a summer of contrasts, one that almost drove Denny away from jumping forever.

The two events Denny recalls that made such an impact covered the sublime to the ridiculous, fire and ice. The first story is about fire.

The Yellowstone Jump base had finally come of age. In previous years, four jumpers had staffed the Park Service facility housed at the airport. This year it

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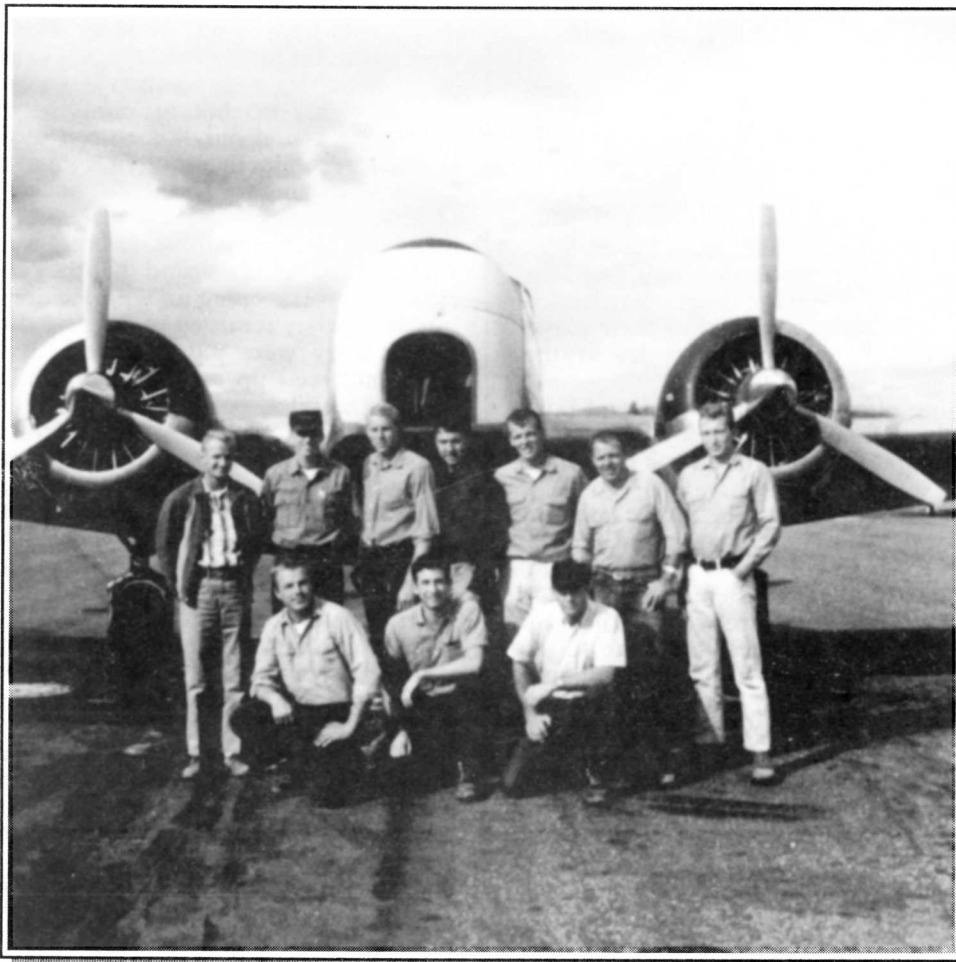
Since our heroes were trying to make a name for the parachute corps, they agreed to the assignment and jumped.

In short, they just about lost their shorts. The three dug like badgers and cut trees like beavers for a couple of hours before the odds stacked up against them. The unanchored fire finally hooked them and gave chase. Merlin Sharp, Norm Simpson and Denny "beat feet" for their drop zone in an effort to save the gear. The fire beat them to it.

The sound of the saw gas can exploding quickened their pace. They arrived at the DZ in time to see all the

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This photo was taken at the West Yellowstone, Montana smokejumper base during the summer of 1966. The aircraft in the background was one of the Johnson Flying Service's Twin Beech AT-11's. Left to Right, Back Row: George Weatherall, pilot; Missoula jumpers Ted Nyquist, '54, Forest Service foreman; Merlin Sharp, '65; Norm Simpson, '65; John Hay, '64; Harry Clark, '59 — trained at McCall but was a Yellowstone Park squad leader who worked within the park before and after fire seasons; Denny "Dennis" Lehfeltdt, '65. Front Row: Charles "Chuck" Halterman, '65; Jim Scofield, '66; and Roger Savage, '57, Forest Service squad leader. George has been flying 29 years for the Montana Power Co. out of Butte, Montana and resides there. Ted lives seven miles east of Missoula. Harry is at Lake Fork, Idaho. We do not know the whereabouts of Merlin, Norm, Chuck and Jim. They are among "The Missing." If anyone knows where they reside, please let us know. Dennis and Roger live in Missoula.

SILK STORIES: Fractured Fables From the Fireline

by Scott Belknap, MYC 83, and Now An Active Missoula Jumper

Cont'd. from page 9

fire part of the summer. In no way would this prepare them for the "ice escapade."

A month later, in early September, the "Survival on Fitchstone Plateau" story starts with another fire days before. Denny and others had just gotten soaked for two days on the Colonnade Falls Fire. Cold torrential rains and lightning nearby chased the jumpers out from the shelter of trees. They were soaked to the bone when they finally left Colonnade Falls. Upon their return to the base they were immediately told to suit up for a patrol flight. Denny talked the foreman into allowing them to eat a meal in town before loading the plane with wet gear from Colonnade Falls. They were quickly airborne and Denny and Norm Simpson were dropped on Fitchstone Plateau.

Two small fires were spotted from the air. It looked like an easy task for two. Denny, being the most experienced in his second year, was put in charge. The way he remembers it, "everything started to go wrong from the start."

As luck would have it, they did not have a map for the area. "When you wrap up the fires, just sit tight and a packer will be in to get you in two days," said the spotter and he slapped them out the door. They landed by the larger fire and looked skyward as their cargo boxes were dropped off on opposite sides of the plateau. It took hours to retrieve the gear.

The fire fighting effort was uneventful and both fires were out by the second day. The boys decided to celebrate their accomplishment with a cook fire and a pot of coffee.

Denny and Norm returned to the larger fire and spied hoofprints nearby. They figured the packer would be back in time, so continued to prepare the cook fire. When they went to their PG bags they discovered that all the matches were wet. In the rush for the patrol flight they had not had time to go through the gear after returning from the drenching received at Colonnade Falls. They looked around and luckily found an overlooked smoke under a fir tree. They coaxed the spark back to life and were soon warming by the cook fire. About that time, Denny stuck a hand out from under the tree and caught a snow flake. A look to the west revealed black skies, an omen of the future.

The packer never returned that evening so they settled in their sleeping bags for the night. Each quietly prayed they would see the packer in the morning, since they were almost out of food.

When they awoke the next morning they saw that it had snowed all night and showed no signs of letting up. They busied themselves collecting wood for the fire and drying their cotton sweatshirts, the only article of warm clothing they packed. The food stores were dwindling, so they dug up the garbage pit and retrieved the discarded "John Wayne" biscuits. Denny secretly saved a can of fruit, it was his last food. The sleeping bags were soaked by the second day of snow. Hunger pangs doubled them over by the second day without food. The pain would mercifully pass. They were truly

in a survival situation.

It continued snowing for five days. The snow was crotch deep. Denny thought to himself that they would never get out.

During the seventh day after the jump they heard a helicopter passing by off in the distance. The accumulated snow surely made rescue by pack stock impossible. And to add to it, a dense fog shrouded the plateau. They sat there at 9,600 feet elevation for two more days before weakness set in, along with the realization that no one would come after them. They decided hiking out was their only option.

Denny had been asleep during the patrol flight and the rookie did not know the country. Without a map they would have to rely on luck. Denny thought they were in the Targee N.F. and figured to head north in the hopes of cutting a road somewhere near Island Park.

They took off hiking, climbing off the plateau. There they found only knee-deep snow. After about two or three miles they caught sight of a packer, one of three out looking for them. The packer fed them a can of boysenberries and led Denny and Norm fourteen miles out to Old Faithful. Denny said they were so excited to have been found that they mustered enough energy to trot, keeping up with the horses.

When they returned to the base the missing pieces of the story were put together. It turned out the helicopter iced up and crashed while searching for them. The pilot, Bob "Crash" Schellinger, and Harry Clark, Yellowstone Park squad leader for the jump unit, were hurt in the accident. Bob wrapped a sleeping bag around himself and waited by the crashed helicopter. Harry took his t-shirt and bound it around a slash in one leg, injured when his leg went through the cracked bubble canopy. He took off walking and managed to get to a road, and then caught a ride to Old Faithful, 15 miles west of Yellowstone Lake. A rescue party was quickly organized to return to the crash site for Bob who had been seriously injured. Twelve jumpers had also been flown in from Missoula in a DC- 2 to mount a search for Denny and Norm. They were equipped with litters to skid out the bodies, whenever they were found. Everyone had given up on Denny and Norm. And Denny could only think about being late for registration for the fall semester at Montana State.

Every word of this account is true. Norm Simpson chose not to return for a second season of jumping. Dennis jumped during 1965-1968 and 1971. He then took a break from 1972 through 1983 to work in the private sector as an accountant. Eventually he gave in to his love of Montana and the adventures of jumping, to return in 1984. He has jumped since that time and 1997 will be his 19th year as a smokejumper — working full-time now.

Bob "Crash" Schellinger, who had been involved in a number of rescue operations through the years, died in 1981 when his helicopter rolled over and down a ridge in a fiery crash along the mountains east of Trout Creek, Montana in the western part of the state. The accident was not his fault. He was a former Johnson Flying Service pilot, and one of the best.

SMOKEJUMPING EQUIPMENT IMPROVEMENT & STANDARDIZATION by Art Jukkala, MSO '56

In the late 1940's, a small group of Forest Service employees in Missoula was assigned the task of improving equipment and techniques for smokejumping, cargo dropping and rescue. When the Aerial Fire Depot complex was completed in 1954, a corner of the parachute loft building was allocated to the Aerial Development group, which in the mid-1950's was headed by Bill Wood. Bill worked under H.K. (Herb) Harris who had overall equipment development responsibilities for Region I.

This Region I Equipment Development Program, or E.D. as it was called, became a national program in the early 1960's with Herb Harris as the first director. It was given the formal name of Missoula Equipment Development Center (MEDC). MEDC's role was greatly expanded to encompass equipment related needs for many phases of Forest Service field operations. But equipment for smokejumping and wildland fire fighting remained a primary and priority function.

In the mid-1960's, MEDC's staff was relocated to Fort Missoula where they are today. A machine shop and materials test lab are located at a Forest Service fleet management site a few miles away. The Center's name was again changed in 1989 to the Missoula Technology and Development Center (MTDC) to more accurately reflect its mission.

Presently the Center is staffed with personnel with a wide array of technical expertise that include: mechanical and electronics engineering; fabrication and test; forestry; psychology; sociology; exercise physiology; photography; video production; graphic design; computer aided drafting (CAD); textile design; procurement specifications; technical report writing; and various other skills. Most of these skills are employed to accomplish the wide variety of smokejumping and wildland fire fighting projects assigned to the Center.

Typically, the Center works on three to six smokejumping related projects each year. Depending upon complexity, some projects are completed within a year while others may take up to five years to finish. Projects are added to the Centers program as new or special problems arise, and as projects are completed. Some projects are a result of employee suggestions from individual smokejumpers. Others emerge from discussions and consensus of smokejumper base representatives and the national smokejumper coordinator (National Aerial Attack Systems Specialist) at annual meetings.

MTDC smokejumping projects vary widely in scope from development of parachute systems, design

of smokejumping protective equipment, the preparation of video training programs on various aspects of smokejumping operations, to evaluation of aircraft for smokejumping and cargo dropping. The latter is done in conjunction with the Interagency Smokejumper Aircraft Screening and Evaluation Board (SASEB). These evaluations include functional tests to insure that smokejumping parachutes can be safely deployed from the candidate aircraft. Also, engineering, design, prototype fabrication, test and FAA certification for static-line anchor cables, door handrails, jump steps, and other needed accessories.

Compiler's Note: Future articles will cover the role of the National Aerial Attack Specialist and the Smokejumper Aircraft Screening and Evaluation Board.

Since 1981, most smokejumping related projects have been accomplished under the leadership of Dave Pierce, Project Leader. Dave's work experience, skills, and problem solving abilities are particularly well suited to his role. Dave began jumping in 1962 as a sport parachutist with the Silvertip Skydivers in Missoula. He began his smokejumping career at Redmond Air Center in 1965 and 1966, then transferred to Missoula for the 1967 and 1968 smokejumping seasons. In 1969 through 1970, Dave left smokejumping and went to work for Parachutes Incorporated in Orange, Massachusetts. At Orange, Dave worked as a skydiving instructor, master parachute rigger, and jump aircraft pilot. In 1971 Dave returned to smokejumping with the BLM's smokejumping operations in Fairbanks, Alaska, where, during the next 10 years, he held foreman positions in the loft, training, and finally operations. In 1981, Dave transferred to MTDC.

Dave's extensive knowledge of smokejumping operations in both the BLM and Forest Service, his experience as a pilot and skydiver, and his academic background, give him unique skills and experience for work at MTDC.

Some of the major projects that Dave and MTDC personnel have worked on in the past 10+ years include: Development of the FS-12R reserve parachute, the H-5 parachute harness, and the new FS-14 main parachute. Formal evaluation of many smokejumping aircraft, including the Embraer Bandierante 110, Dornier 228, C-23A, Cessna Caravan, and the Cessna 206. Development, test, and certification of smokejumping anchor cables and accessories for these and other smokejumping aircraft. Development of a bench seat to restrain smokejumpers, and development of the computer graphic "Parachute Maneuvering Simulator."

SMOKEJUMPING EQUIPMENT IMPROVEMENT & STANDARDIZATION by Art Jukkala, MSO '56

cont'd. from pg. 11

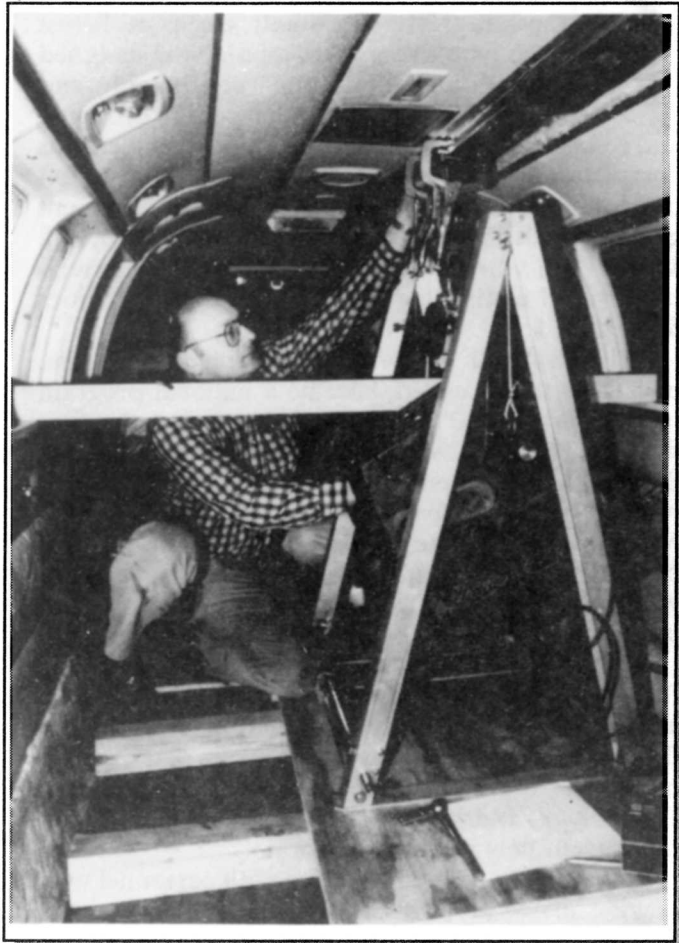
Aside from these specific smokejumping projects, MTDC has national, interagency responsibilities for providing special equipment and technology for all wildland fire fighting and firefighters. Center personnel specialize in personal protective equipment, equipment for firefighters, as well as fire fighting safety and health issues. Flame resistant clothing, a forest fire shelter, physical fitness tests, physical conditioning programs, studies of hand tool design, sleep/rest requirements, and health hazards of smoke are examples of the Center's activities.

The following former smokejumpers hold, or have held, full-time positions at MTDC:

Bill Wood, MSO '43; Al Bellusci, MSO '46; Hugh Fowler, MSO '47; Grover (Doc) Tyler, MSO '47; Martin Onishuk, MSO '51, Ray Beasley, MCY '52; Cliff Blake, MSO '55; Art Jukkala, MSO '56; Roland (Ron) Stoleson, MSO '56; Tom Uphill, MSO '56; Jeff Davis, MSO '57; Mark Greydanus, MSO '60; Dave Pierce, RAC '65; Stuart (Ted) Putnam, MSO '66; Ben Lowman, MSO '68; George Jackson, MSO '74; Jim Kautz, MSO '74; Keith Windell, RAC '80; Bob Beckley, MSO '83.

The latter seven are presently working at the Center. The others are either retired or working elsewhere.

In the past 40 years, many additional smokejumpers and pilots working on detail or temporary assignment, have made significant contributions to the Center's program or work. Because of the very large number who worked on temporary assignment - probably a hundred or more - listing them would be prohibitive.



MTDC mechanical engineer Dick Karsky conducting a test to insure that a new smokejumper anchor cable design meets strength requirements. Photo courtesy of Dave Pierce, RAC '65, MTDC Equipment Specialist.



Furthermore, because formal records are not kept, omissions would likely occur.

Working with architects, MTDC personnel have completed general plans for a new building and someday, if funds become available for construction, MTDC could return to its Aerial Fire Depot roots. The AFD Master Site Plan includes infrastructure for an MTDC facility west of the Intermountain Fire Sciences Laboratory.

Left to Right: NCSB (Winthrop) smokejumpers Jim Allen (squad leader and spotter), '46; Gordon Wood, '48; Robert Linn, '48; and Bill Eicher, '48 during training in July 1948. Jim lives at Redmond, Oregon. We do not know where Gordon, Bob and Bill are located. If you do, please let us know. Photo courtesy of Ned Hauptner, NCSB '48.

PROJECT "COLDFEET," 1962

The Fairbanks Alaska Daily News - Miner on July 31, 1963 had a story which read in part: "...Jerome A. Hirschman, 39-year-old scientist on a floating ice island now nearing the North Pole, died Saturday night, it was learned today...on ARLIS II, one of two U.S. manned ice islands on the Arctic Ocean." His body would later be picked up by an aerial "Skyhook" system.

In September, 1943 Lt. Alex Doster, a paratrooper, was the first human to be picked up from the ground by a low-flying aircraft. He was yanked into the air by a Stinson Reliant flying at 125 mph. The crew on the aircraft brought him up into the plane in less than three minutes.

Robert Fulton, a very talented inventor, began experimenting in 1950 to retrieve objects from the ground through a pickup system. During the next several years he refined his pickup system, using a 500' braided nylon line with a test strength of 4,000 pounds, which was raised to its full length by a dirigible-shaped balloon filled with helium. The aircraft utilized had "horns" protruding from the nose, and once the line was engaged, the balloon was torn free of the rope and a spring-loaded mechanism (a "skyanchor") secured the line to the plane. The line then flowed up under the plane where it was snared by a J-hook and clamped at the "Joe Hole" in the belly of the aircraft, and clamped at the tail, and then attached to a winch that pulled the object up to the aircraft.

The "Skyhook" aerial retrieval system was used in an experiment to pick up S/Sgt. Levi Woods, U.S.M.C., on August 12, 1958 by a Lockheed P2V patrol bomber. The experiment was a success and the system was set for its first operational use in Project "Coldfeet."

Project Coldfeet commenced during May, 1961. A Navy plane flying over the Arctic Ocean reported sighting an abandoned Soviet drift station - NP (North Pole) 9. The Office of Naval Research wanted to see how Soviet efforts on drift stations compared to United States operations.

ONR selected Major James Smith, U.S.A.F., who was a highly qualified paratrooper and Russian linguist, and Lieutenant Leonard LeSchack, U.S.N.R.,

to parachute to NP9 and then be picked up by the Skyhook system. However, there were a number of delays and NP9 continued to drift farther away.

Then those planning the mission received good news. The Russians had quickly abandoned ice station NP8 after a pressure ridge had destroyed its ice runway. The Canadian Government agreed to the use of the Royal Canadian Air Force base at Resolute Bay, west of Greenland and 600 miles from NP8, for the venture involving that drift station. Bad weather and a navigational error delayed the project, but on May 4th, 1962 NP8 was sighted, far to the east of its predicted position.

ONR was certain Project Coldfeet would work, but money for the project had run out. Intermountain Aviation at Marana, Arizona had specialized in aerial delivery and pickup systems and had equipped a B-17G bomber with Fulton recovery gear. Robert Fulton contacted former smokejumper Gar Thorsrud, President of Intermountain Aviation, to see if he would be interested in taking part in Project Coldfeet. Gar liked the idea.

Intermountain's B-17 and a Curtiss C-46 support aircraft flew to Barrow, Alaska instead of Resolute Bay and the search for NP8 began again. On May 29th the B-17, flown by Connie Seigrist and Douglas Price, and assisted by a U.S. Navy P2V, located NP8. Jack Wall, an ex-smokejumper,

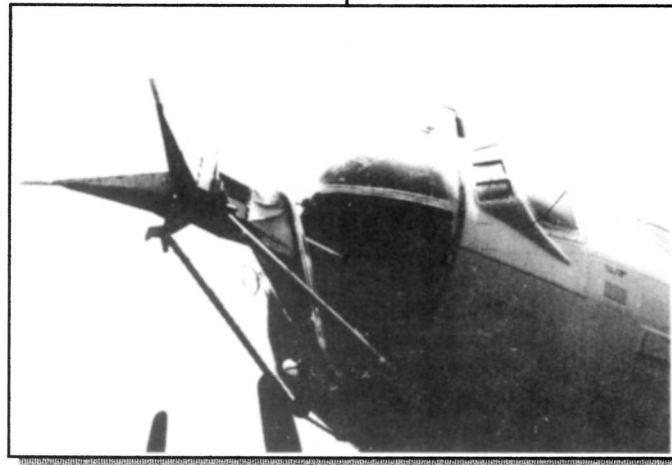
selected a drop point and tossed out streamers from the B-17 to determine wind drift. Major Smith and Lieutenant LeSchack then parachuted from the "Joe Hole" in the belly of the B-17 to NP8. They were to remain there for 72 hours, while exploring the abandoned Soviet base and retrieving equipment and records.

Back at Barrow Intermountain mechanics Leo Turk and Carson Gerken installed the "horns" - which had been flown north in the

C-46 - on the nose of the B-17.

On June 1st the mission to pick up Smith and LeSchack with the Skyhook system got underway.

The pilots were again Seigrist and Price. William Cont'd. from page 13



The nose of B-17 N809Z, showing the locking mechanism. The "horns" are not installed. Photo courtesy of Pictorial Histories Pub. Co.

PROJECT "COLD FEET," 1962

Jordan, an experienced Pan American Airways polar navigator, was on the B-17, as were a number of former smokejumpers. In addition to Thorsrud and Wall, coordinator, they were: Miles L. Johnson, pickup master at the belly position; Jerry Daniels, winch operator; Randy "Toby" Scott, nose-trigger operator; and Bob Nicol, tail position operator. Capt. John Cadwalader, U.S.N., in charge of Project Coldfeet, and Bob Fulton were also on the B-17.

Two aerial searches on June 1st from Barrow failed to locate NP8. However, on the 2nd a Navy P2V took off 30 minutes before the B-17 and found the Russian ice station and guided the B-17 to the location. Smith and LeSchack had packed Russian equipment in a canvas sack and it was successfully picked up by the Skyhook equipment. Next, LeSchack and Smith were retrieved successfully during two passes over NP8. Both were awarded drinks of "medicinal" scotch once they were on the B-17. Legions of Merit were presented to them November, 1962.

The story now shifts back to the death of Jerome

and the plane arrived at Barrow on July 15th. However Hirschman's condition had improved and after being placed on hold for 36 hours, the B-17 and crew returned to Marana, Arizona.

Then, during the evening of July 26th, Hirschman again became very ill and the next day died while eating a bowl of peaches. Hirschman's mother wanted his body brought out as soon as possible for burial in Wisconsin.

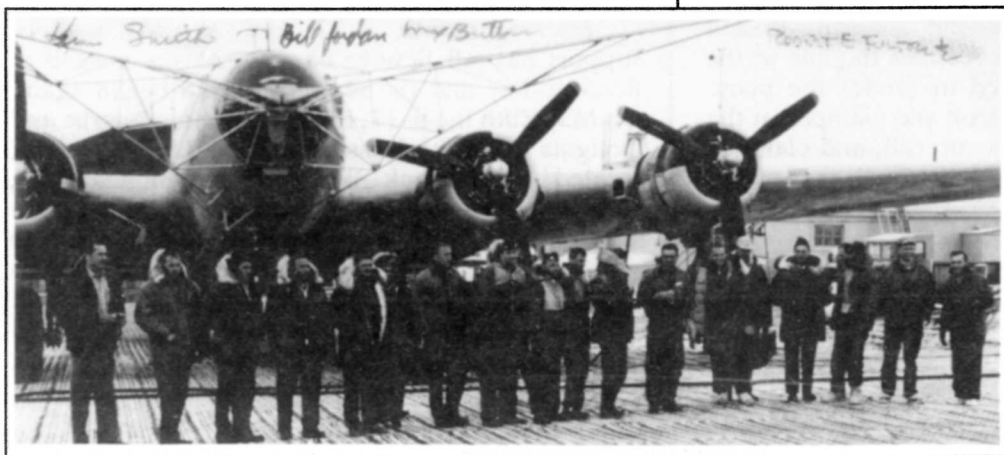
The Office of Naval Research requested that Intermountain's B-17 again be flown to Barrow.

On August 9th the B-17 and crew reached ARLIS II. The pilots this time were Douglas Price and Bob Zimmer. Bill Jordan acted as navigator. The Skyhook operators were Miles Johnson, Jerry Daniels, Bob Nicol and John (Kirk) Samsel - he had taken the place of Randy "Toby" Scott. Jack Wall flew ahead in a Wien Alaska DC-4 and dropped 850 pounds of Skyhook equipment. By the time the B-17 reached ARLIS II the weather had deteriorated and the plane had to return to Barrow.

Two days later conditions improved and the B-

17 took off again. The crew encountered a series of cloud layers and they had to climb to 18,000', and yet they were still in clouds. Ice began to form on the deflector lines leading to the wingtips. The B-17 began to shake and then started to plunge toward the ice pack. At 400' the plane broke into the clear. At 10:36 p.m. the aircraft was over the ice station, but fog had returned, to a height of 300'. Price told those on the ground to release the balloon. He could see it rise up through the fog. Heading for the line attached to the balloon he engaged it on the first try. Kirk secured it at the nose position, Miles

at the "Joe Hole" and Bob at the tail. The rope was then released at the nose and "Joe Hole." Bob fed the loose end in at the tail and Jerry and Miles secured it to the winch. Bob then released the clamp at the tail and the body in the sack was winched up. Bob grasped the sack and placed it in. Cont'd. from page 14



B-17G N809Z sitting on PSP (Pierced Steel Planking) at Barrow shortly after the pickup of Major Smith and Lt. LeSchack in 1963. Left to Right: Connie Seigrist, pilot; Bob Nicol, tail operator; Jerry Daniels, winch operator; Miles Johnson, pickup master at belly position; Doug Price, pilot; Randolph "Toby" Scott, nose-trigger operator; Jack Wall, jumpmaster; four members of a Navy P2V patrol bomber; Major Jim Smith, holding cup; unknown; Gar Thorsrud, President of Intermountain Aviation - with cap, in front of prop blade of #1 engine; Capt. John Cadwaladar, Project Coldfeet Mission Commander, Office of Naval Research; Lt. Leonard LeSchack; unknown; unknown. Photo courtesy of Bob Nicol.

Hirschman, 92 miles south of the North Pole while on ARLIS II (Arctic Research Laboratory Ice Station II). On July 9, 1963 Hirschman, a thirty-nine-year-old geophysicist from the University of Wisconsin, had become ill while engaged in activities at ARLIS II. Intermountain's B-17 and crew were chartered to pick up Hirschman with the Skyhook equipment

PROJECT "COLD FEET," 1962

the B-17. Also in the sack were letters for home from members of ARLIS II. (They saw the sack rise up into the fog and disappear. Then, down came a parachute with some cargo attached - two one-gallon jugs of Mexican gin.) So ended an amazing episode, 92 miles south of the North Pole.

A book has been published by the Naval Institute Press at Annapolis, Maryland relating to this story. The title is Project Coldfeet. Secret Mission to a Soviet Ice Station.

In 1965 the same B-17 was used in the James Bond movie Thunderball. Two dummies - substituted for Sean Connery and his leading lady - were lifted aloft to the plane with the Skyhook equipment.

Former smokejumpers who were involved with the Skyhook equipment at NP8 and ARLIS II were: Gar Thorsrud, MSO '46; Jack Wall, MSO '48; Jerry Daniels, MSO '58-deceased; Miles Johnson, MYC '53; Bob Nicol, MSO '52; Kirk Samsel, MSO '60-deceased; and Randy "Toby" Scott, MYC '57. Gar and Jack live in

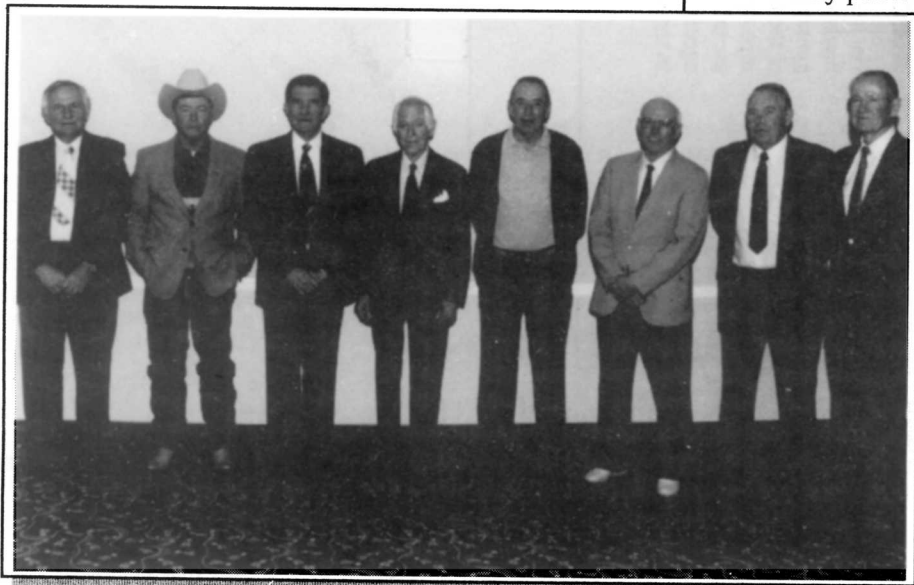


B-17 N809Z, converted back to WWII configuration and in colors of 490th Bomb Group, 8th Air Force. It is owned by Evergreen Air Venture Museum. The parent company is Evergreen Aviation of McMinnville, Oregon. Photo courtesy of Tony Percival, NCSB '54.

Tucson, Miles has moved from McCall to Boise. Toby calls Burnet, Texas home, winters, and Helmville, Montana home, summers. Bob lives in Missoula and is still an active smokejumper pilot, flying for Leading Edge Aviation Service of Missoula. He usually pilots a Twin Otter out of the Grangeville, Idaho jumper base during summers.

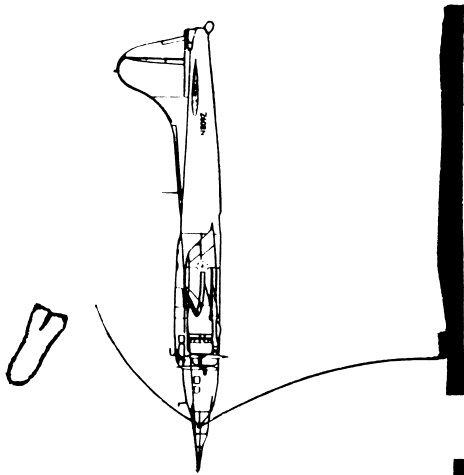
Bob, Jack and Carl Gidlund, MSO '58, provided material for this story.

The B-17G bomber used with Skyhook is now owned by the Evergreen Air Venture Museum at McMinnville, Oregon and will be flown to Missoula by Penn Stohr Jr. for an airshow July 12 and 13. It has been converted back to a WWII B-17G bomber and has markings of the 490th Bomb Group, 8th Air Force.



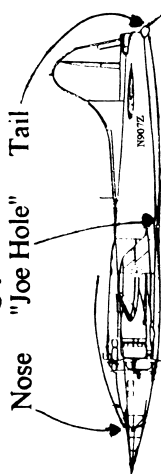
This picture was taken at Las Vegas during Super Bowl weekend, 1995. The B-17 used in the Skyhook Operation happened to be there and some of the reunion participants were able to get another ride in it. Those pictured, who were involved in that project are: Left to Right: Doug Price, pilot; Toby Scott, nose-trigger operator; Bill Jordan, navigator; Robert Fulton, inventor; Jack Wall, backup systems operator and Jumpmaster; Miles Johnson, pickup master at belly position; and Connie Seigrist, pilot. Photo courtesy of Bob Nicol.

**THE YEAR 2000 REUNION
HAS BEEN SET FOR
REDDING, CALIFORNIA.
DATES HAVE NOT BEEN
ESTABLISHED.**



Location of winch.

The rope was secured at the following positions:

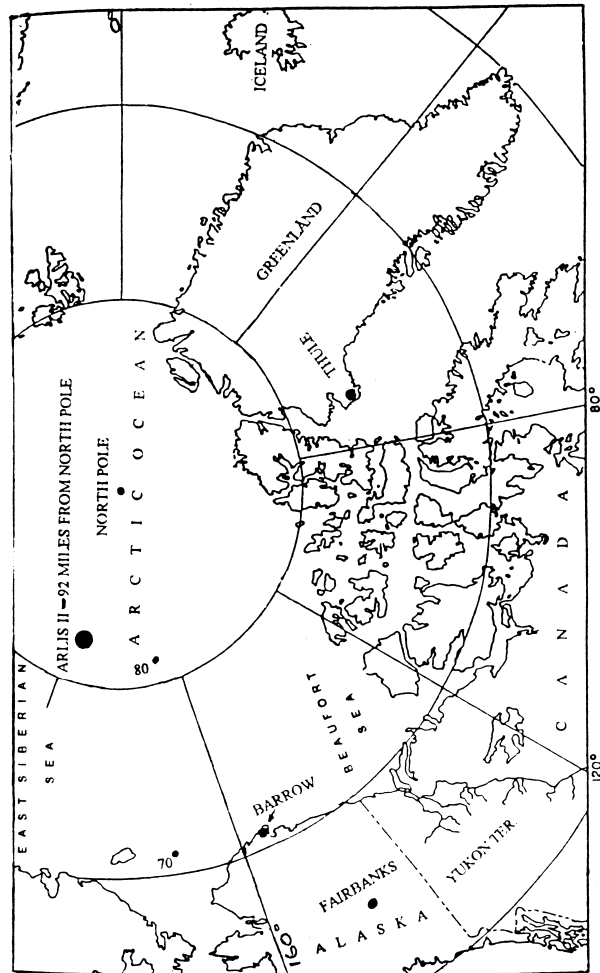


Nose "Joe Hole" Tail

C. The rope was then disengaged at the nose and the "Joe Hole". The man at the tail gunner's former position passed the rope in to others who secured it to a winch located where the radio operator was once located--just forward of the trailing edge of the wing. The rope was then unlocked at the tail position and the sack winched up and placed inside the fuselage. Total elapsed time was about six minutes.

B. The loose end of the rope slipped down over the top of the fuselage and also swung up under it. Where the belly gunner was once stationed, there was a "Joe Hole" and one of the men would reach down with a "j-hook" and bring the rope up and anchor it there. The rope was also anchored at the tail. The sack was airborne at this point. During WW II agents were dropped into enemy occupied territory from holes in the bottoms of aircraft, known as "Joe Holes".

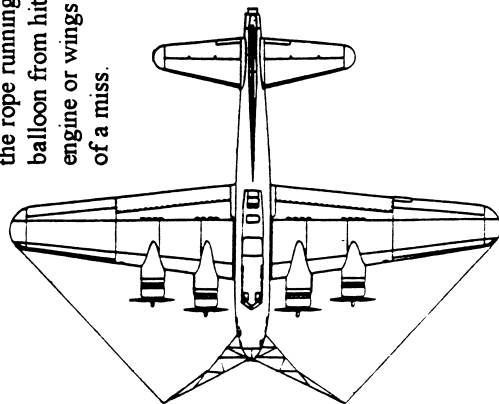
A. As the B-17 engaged the rope, the balloon was ripped free by the force of the impact. The locking device in the nose automatically made four to five turns, securely clamping the rope at that location.



A map showing the location of ARLIS II--ARCTIC RESEARCH LABORATORY ICE STATION II--where the body was retrieved through use of the "Skyhook". The location was almost 1,000 miles from Pt. Barrow, Alaska and ninety-two miles from the North Pole.

Drawings were prepared by Jack Demmons.

Top view of the B-17, showing the "horns" and deflective ropes attached to them--they prevented the rope running to the balloon from hitting the engine or wings in case of a miss.



FRANCIS AND LOLA LUFKIN

Francis and Lola Lufkin celebrated their 60th wedding anniversary March 27, 1997. They were married at Yamhill, Oregon on March 27, 1937.

Lola graduated from high school at Colville, Washington north of Spokane in 1933 and moved to Winthrop in 1934. Francis settled at Winthrop in 1930 and graduated from high school there in 1933.

They had four children: Ray (deceased in 1989), Ron (CJ '60), Larry (CJ '63) and Joyce.

Francis began his career in the Forest Service at the Eight Mile Ranger Station out of Winthrop and later became a smokechaser, walking or riding horses to fires in the North Cascades in north western Washington.

During October, 1939 Francis and several other Forest Service employees were chosen to participate in an experimental program at Winthrop. At first, his job was to climb trees and help get professional jumpers and their parachutes out of trees. The program was designed to see if it was feasible to drop jumpers into open and timbered areas to fight fires.

Francis became a part of that experimental parachute group in 1939 on somewhat of a dare. The professionals asked if he would like to make a jump. They apparently thought he would not accept the offer, but gave him some rudimentary training and suited him up for a jump. Just before he climbed into a Stinson Gull-wing aircraft--the first airplane the Forest Service ever owned--a Forest Service photographer took a picture of him. A copy of that photo was given to Francis by Bruce Babbitt, Interior Secretary, during the 1995

National Smokejumper Reunion in Missoula. That picture also appears in the April, 1996 edition of the N.S.A. newsletter.

Francis said he figured that if the professionals each had to make their first jumps in that experimental program, so could he. He made that jump and the rest is history.

Francis and Glenn Smith made the first fire jumps in Region 6 out of Winthrop August 10, 1940 on a fire along Little Bridge Creek in the Chelan National Forest. He became base manager at NCSB-North Cascades Smokejumper Base in 1941 and served in that position until retiring in May, 1972.

This month Francis suffered several small strokes and at the time this article is being prepared for the April newsletter, he is in a nursing home at Bellingham, Washington. He is in serious condition and too weak to walk, can barely move his arms and has trouble remembering names and places. We have been keeping in touch with family members. We fervently hope Francis will recover soon. Lola is at 2711 Orleans, Apt B, Bellingham, 98226. Her telephone number is (360) 650-9671. For a number of years Francis and Lola have spent winters in the Bellingham area and summers at Winthrop.

Should anyone wish to do research on the 1939 parachute test

project out of Winthrop, information can be found in an early November, 1939 Sunday edition of the Seattle Times, which includes pictures.

The above story was provided us by Larry Lufkin, who currently lives at Olympia, Washington. Ron resides at Aberdeen.



Francis and Lola Lufkin at the time of their wedding at Yamhill, Oregon, March 27, 1937. Photo courtesy of Larry Lufkin.

“JUMPERS OF THE NORTH CASCADES”

by Bill Moody, NCSB '57

Almost six decades ago the smokejumper program was born in the Methow Valley, in upper north central Washington. Today the 20 jumpers of the North Cascades Smokejumper Base (alias NCSB, Winthrop or Okanogan Aerial Project) continue to serve their constituents in some of the most rugged and remote tall timber back country of the United States - the Olympics and Central/North Cascade Mountains of Washington.

The Birthplace of Smokejumping

With the premature termination of the aerial delivery of water and chemicals experiments in 1938 the stage was set to look at another innovative concept — the feasibility of parachuting fire fighters to fight forest fires. The project, authorized under the Experimental Aerial Fire Control Project, was strongly supported by Region 6, the Pacific Northwest Region. The Twisp and Winthrop Ranger Districts on the Chelan National Forest (later Okanogan National Forest) were selected as the project's location. The Chelan National Forest was “aerial minded,” already routinely using parachutes to deliver supplies to fire and other forest crews. The Forest Service owned a 3,800 foot airstrip (Intercity Airport between the towns of Twisp and Winthrop). The national forest land surrounding the airport was rugged, ranging from 1,600 ft. to 8,000 ft., and the area was covered with a wide range of vegetation types. Experienced fire personnel were readily available to provide logistical and technical support.

Between October 5 and November 15, 1939 fifty-eight experimental jumps were made. The concept had proven feasible - the program was born.

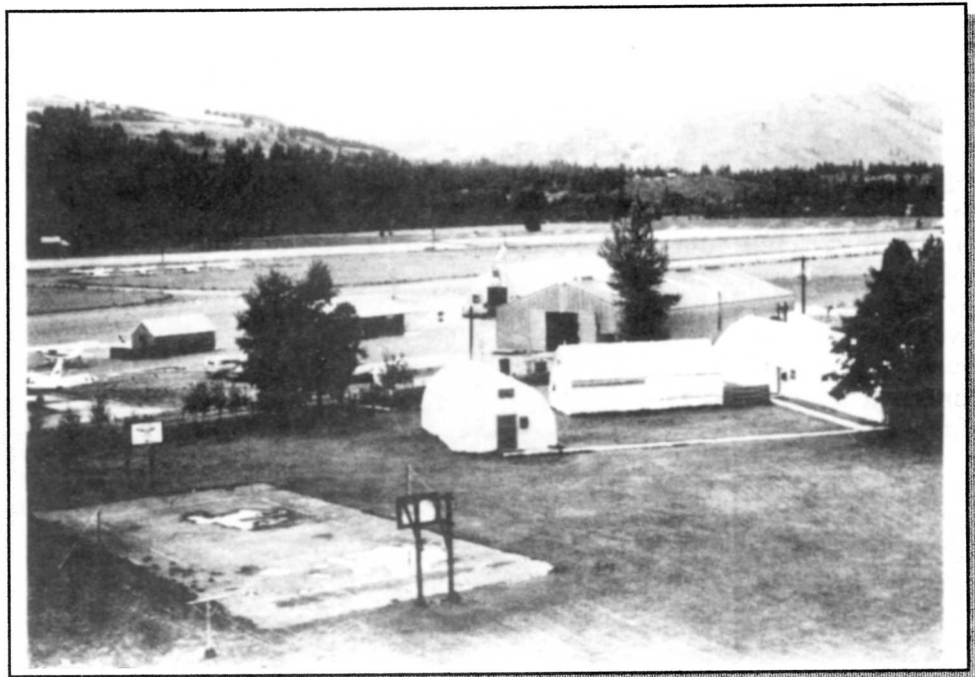
The Local Connection

The project contractor, Eagle Parachute Company, hired two locals, Alan Honey and Dick Tuttle, as

part of the professional jump crew. Neither had previous jump experience. During the experimentals eight Forest Service employees (including Fire Guard Francis Lufkin and CCC Telephone Line Foreman Harry Tuttle, father of professional jumper Dick Tuttle) made their first jumps. Lufkin would go on to head up NCSB from 1941 until his retirement in 1972. Walt Anderson, Chelan National Forest Asst. Fire Staff and Project Leader, (after Lage Wernstedt became ill) suggested that the new breed of firefighters be called “Smokejumpers.” Anderson also made one jump during the experimentals.

1940 - 1944

Due to national budget constraints the Winthrop crew size was capped at five jumpers, including 1939 professionals Glenn Smith, Virgil Derry and Dick Tuttle, plus fireguard Francis Lufkin and rookie jumper George Honey. Prior to the jump season Dick Tuttle was seriously injured when he fell out of



North Cascades Smokejumper Base. Left to Right, background: Small building by the aircraft houses aircraft petroleum products and the other half is the saw repair shed; the building to its right is the administration and dispatch area; the Quonset to its right with the windsock is the loft building; large building in front of it is the fire cache and smokejumper equipment warehouse. Equipment for fire drops is also assembled there.

Front Row, Left to Right: Quonset hut behind the basketball court is the training building for classes and also holds a universal gym; center building was the bathhouse. It has been replaced by a modern structure; the building behind the trees is the barracks structure; the mess hall is out of sight and is in front of the barracks. Photo credit: Pictorial Histories Pub. Co.

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a tree while erecting an antenna. Dick did not recover enough to continue jumping. The crew operated out of the Winthrop Ranger Station and Intercity Airport in 1940. In July 1940 Region 1 jumpers Rufus Robinson and Earl Cooley made the first fire jumps in the program's history. Rufus Robinson and Jim Waite jumped the second fire shortly after. It would be August 10, 1940 before Glenn Smith and Francis Lufkin would make the first jumps in the Pacific Northwest Region. A second fire was jumped by George Honey and Virgil Derry on August 11th. As WWII evolved, both lack of funding and experienced smokejumpers precluded staffing NCSB on a seasonal basis. After serving as a training instructor in Region 1, Lufkin returned to the Chelan National

Forest as aerial project foreman to manage the paracargo operation and be available for booster crews assigned from Region 1.

In 1945 fifteen Civilian Public Service (CPS) jumpers were assigned to the Chelan National Forest operation under Lufkin. The CPS crew was augmented by the 555th Airborne Infantry Battalion during periods of high fire activity. In August twenty-three 555th paratroopers jumped near the Canadian border on the Parks Fire and 98 from the 555th joined 25 Forest Service jumpers on the Peavy Creek Fire, again along the Canadian border, in what is now the Pasayten Wilderness. Military C-47 aircraft were used.

With the end of WWII, and increased financing, NCSB recruited experienced jumpers from the 1945 CPS crew and rookies by the “normal application process.” Many WWII vets entered the program. Training continued in Region 1 until 1947. Lufkin has some great stories about the train rides with the



Bill Moody and Nikolai Andrev, USSR, prior to their historic jump to Bear Creek smokejumper training site, Okanogan N.F., 1977. Andrev was in charge of the USSR's 2,000-man smokejumper force. There will be more about this event in the July newsletter. Bill was NCSB manager at the time. Photo Courtesy of Bill Moody.

jumpers to and from training in Region 1.

In 1948 training facilities, administration and loft facilities were constructed on the west side of Intercity Airport, next to the Methow River. As the finishing touches were being put on the loft the “Flood of 1948” - a mega century flood - was undermining the loft. The loft was swept down the river. A new facility was constructed on the east side of the runway in 1949. The 1948 crew was temporarily increased to 35 jumpers due to forest road washouts and fire crew access concerns. From the early 1950's NCSB operated from various spike bases in northeast Oregon. In 1957 La Grande was selected as the spike base location (and later as a satellite, base) until La Grande became a permanent base in 1974.

“Jumpers of the North Cascades” to be continued in the July newsletter.

CHUTE THE BREEZE: THROUGH THE DECADES

Some of the pictures and stories we received during the past three months were not used in this edition, but will be included in the July newsletter. Keep them coming in. We will mention some corrections and changes for the past January edition in the July issue also. We will have three pages for this part of the newsletter in July.

EDWIN "NED" HAUPTNER, NCSB, '48: Ned currently lives at Milton, Massachusetts, on the southern outskirts of Boston. He sent us a listing of NCSB rookie jumpers during the years 1940, '45, '46, '47 & '48 (four in 1940 and twenty-one in 1948). He served in the US Army Medical Corps during 1946 and 1947 and graduated from the University of Miami at Coral Gables Florida in 1987 with an A.B. in psychology/philosophy. New York was his home state at the time he began as a smokejumper. He is deeply involved with the Massachusetts Aviation Historical Society.

VERLAND OHLSON, MSO, '49: Verland joined the First Special Service Force (The Devil's Brigade) in 1942 - a volunteer unit made up of Americans and Canadians, and received jump training in that unit in 1942. He landed on Kiska Island in Alaska during WWII and later fought in the mountains of Italy, where he was wounded during the advance to take Rome. His home state was New York and he graduated from New York State Ranger School and also obtained a degree in Forestry from the University of Montana. He had a Forestry career and retired in 1980 and now lives at Convey, New Hampshire.

TED BURGEON, MYC, '50: Ted also jumped out of Idaho City. He has a B.A. in Education and served five years in the U.S. Marine Corps. His career has been in the field of International Education. Ted has lived in six countries and visited 45. He once sailed a 36' sailboat from San Francisco to the South Pacific area. Ted lived at Riyadh during the Gulf War and resided at Moscow during the time of the 1993 "White House Shoot-out", and took pictures from a position next to tanks as they fired. Ted now lives at Sunriver, Oregon.

HAROLD "MAX" MAXWELL, CJ, '55: Max became a U.S. Navy fighter pilot after leaving the smokejumpers. We will have a feature story on Max in the July, 1997 newsletter. He currently resides at Vero Beach, Florida.

DAVID OWEN, RAC, '66: Dave's original name was Dave Dilox and he had it changed for personal preference. He also jumped in Alaska and was one of only a few smokejumpers to ever jump from a B-26, a former medium bomber - originally known as an A-26. He graduated from California State University at Sacramento with a B.A. in English - 1970. We will have more about Dave in the July newsletter. He resides at Stockton, California.

STEPHEN HARTMAN, MSO, '67: Steve also jumped out of Alaska. During one jump there, the left sleeve of his jumpsuit caught on the latch of the door of the DC-3. The sleeve was ripped all the way to his shoulder and he had a number of twists, but landed OK. This incident took place at 1:00 A.M. about 40 miles northwest of Bettles, Alaska in 1968. Nels Jensen, MSO '62, was his foreman. Steve was in Army Aviation at one time and Special Forces Reserve - Infantry. He has an A.A., Forestry Technology, North Idaho College, Coeur d' Alene, Idaho - 1978, and had a career in Forestry Engineering - logging. He retired in 1983. Steve now lives at St. Maries, Idaho.

KIRK HALE, LA GRANDE, '79: Kirk once jumped with a Russian parachute. He was involved in five rescue jumps between 1979-1982. He also jumped out of Fairbanks, Alaska. His career has involved being Director of Training, Tualatin Valley Fire and Rescue in Oregon. Kirk lives at Mulino, Oregon, Clackamas County, near Portland.

TIM PETTIT, MYC, '75: Tim worked out of the Boise, Fort Wainwright and Redding bases during his 21 years of jumping. Up to this year he has made 365 jumps. He served in the U.S. Navy from 1970-1972.

MARK STERMITZ, MSO, '82: Mark's dad was also a Missoula jumper. He passed away in 1981. Mark has a B.S., Political Science - 1980 and a J.D. in Law - 1983 - from the University of Montana. He is a Navy veteran who currently practices law in Kalispell, Montana.

DENNIS TERRY, RDD, '90: Dennis was originally from Nebraska and migrated to California. He is currently in his 8th year of jumping and has qualified as a rigger and spotter. He has jumped from eight different types of aircraft. Dennis is a graduate of Colorado State University. He lives at Redding, California.