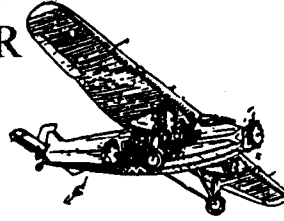


⊕

# THE STATIC LINE

## NATIONAL SMOKEJUMPER ASSOCIATION

P.O. Box 4081  
Missoula, Montana 59806-4081

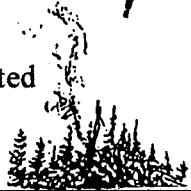


NON PROFIT ORG.  
U.S. POSTAGE  
**PAID**  
MISSOULA, MT  
PERMIT NO. 321

Tel. (406) 549-9938  
E-mail: [smokejumpers@smokejumpers.com](mailto:smokejumpers@smokejumpers.com)  
Web Address: <http://www.smokejumpers.com>



Forwarding Return Postage  
Guaranteed, Address Correction Requested



---

Volume

Quarterly

April 1998

Edition 5

---



# THE STATIC LINE

*The Static Line Staff*

*Compiler-Editor: Jack Demmons*

*Advisory Staff: Don Courtney, Art Jukkala, Roger Savage*

*Computer Operators: Phil Davis, Jack Demmons*

## **PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE**

I'd like to report that on April 10 at the Aerial Fire Depot, here in Missoula, sixteen Directors and fire officers, along with several interested members, met for the Annual Board Meeting. Jon McBride, our Treasurer, presented a budget for the coming year, which was approved, and provided a financial report which shows that we, as an organization, are in pretty good shape.

Conald "Bud" Clarke, smokejumper retiree, has agreed to take the lead in the area of merchandizing/orders. Director Tim Aldridge has agreed to head up a membership committee.

Directors Fred Rohrbach, Bill Moody and Jerry Timmons are aggressively raising funds for the video project, which is being targeted for completion late this fall.

Planning efforts are underway for the

upcoming reunion in Redding in the year 2000.

You will notice that a ballot is enclosed with the newsletter to elect two members to your Board of Directors. Please vote and return your ballot by June 5th in the self-addressed return envelope.

Your Executive Committee meets the second Tuesday of every month at 7:00 p.m. at our headquarters in Hanger 24 at the airport, so if you are in Missoula and can drop by the meeting we certainly welcome you.

Have a great spring/summer.

Best regards,

*Laird Robinson*

Laird Robinson, President

National Smokejumper Association

## **NORTHWEST JUMPERS RENDEZVOUS IN NORTH IDAHO, MARCH 14, 1998, by Carl Gidlund, MSO 58**

They came, they saw, and they drank wine, plus pop, booze and beer. That's how 28 current and former smokejumpers, plus associate members, aircrew members, guests, "wannabes," and family members from Western Montana, North Idaho and Eastern Washington "paid" for a room and TV/VCR rental for the first—and hopefully annual—rendezvous of Northwest smokejumpers.

The March 14 event at Templin's Resort in Post Falls, Idaho was planned and executed by a committee, including NSA Directors Jim Blaine and Carl Gidlund, plus NSA members Steve Badraun, Dick Dillingham, Francis Pulliam and Fred "Fritz" Wolfrum. The excuse for the event was a viewing of "Smokejumper Boot Camp," a 43-minute Learning Channel program on the 1997 Forest Service smokejumper rookie training, which took place last June in Redmond, Oregon.

The TV program was a good excuse to get together, according to Wolfrum. "If the NSA is to continue to be viable, we're going to have to sponsor more gatherings like this," he said. "Our NSA reunions are wonderful, but the five years between each is far too long when you've got



*NSA President Laird Robinson presenting former Air America pilot, Mike Seale, with a Life Membership plaque.*

some great 'silk stories' to tell," he commented.

Highlights

included a welcome by NSA President Laird

*(Continued on page 18)*

# NEW MEMBERS

Note: This listing of new members includes those who joined between January 12-April 17, 1998. Those who joined after April 17 will be mentioned in the 20th Newsletter, which will be sent out in July. Should names be misspelled, or addresses be incorrect or changed, please let us know as soon as possible.

NAME	ADDRESS	BASE	IST YEAR
Albert, Thomas "Tom" W.	679 Hilltop DR, Apt 15, Redding, CA 96003	CJ	'64
August, Michael "Mike"	2222 Alki AV SW Suite 207, Seattle, WA 98116	LGRD	'79
Bergerson, John P.	735 Hartack CT, Meridian, ID 83642	MSO	'64
Boucher, Albert "Al" N.	1022 NW Larch CT, Redmond, OR 97756	CJ	'49
Colgan, Daniel "Dan" L.	3605 Pioneer AV, Cheyenne, WY 82001	MSO	'58
Dillingham, Richard "Dick"	3912 Alder CR, Spokane, WA 99223	MSO	'59
Dwyer, Thomas "Tom" W.	PO Box 598, Kernville, CA 93238	RDD	'79
Engels, David "Dave" A.	21264 Liberty ST NE, Aurora, OR 97002	MYC	'66
Fairchild, Scott "Scotty" M.	PO Box 22535, Juneau, AK 99802	RAC	'74
Farinetti, Raymond "Ray" J.	3840 Summer Terrace, Titusville, FL 32780	CJ	'64
Furman, William "Bill"	One Centerpointe DR Suite 200, Lake Oswego, OR 97035	NCSB	'62
Hall, Dann J.	PO Box 1311, Sandpoint, ID 83864	FBX	'71
Hammond, Al	10141 East Shore, Polson, MT 59860	MSO	'46
Hurley, Robert "Bob" Jr.	PO Box 15396, Boise, ID 83715	BOISE	'87
Jones, Stanley "Stan" R.	1324 S 6th ST, Milwaukee, WI 53204	RDD	'83
Katt, Jerry A.	PO Box 142, Marissa, IL 62257	CJ	'67
Kinyon, Robert "Bob" C.	550 S State ST, Sutherlin, OR 97479	NCSB	'73
Kosan, Douglas "Doug" J.	2658 Richmar DR, Beavercreek, OH 45434	MSO	'52
McElroy, Harold "Mac" D.	11971 Hanley DR, Grass Valley, CA 95949	MSO	'51
McMillan, Michael "Mike"	1513 Gaffney RD, Ft Wainwright, AK 99703	FBX	'96
Musquez, Ben O. MSgt, Ret	PO Box 517, D'Hanis, TX 78850	MSO	'56
Olson, Claire M.	1417 Portland DR, Bismarck, ND 58504	MSO	'68
Oswald, Thomas "Tom" D.	116 Water ST, PO Box 285, Bolivar, OH 44612	MSO	'58
Ransom, James "Jim" C.	61052 Ladera RD, #400, Bend, OR 97702	NCSB	'65
Reynaud, Steven "Steve" T.	PO Box 727, Twisp, WA 98856	NCSB	'63
Rylander, Neil, Lt Col, Ret	4600 NE 139th ST, Vancouver, WA 98686	MSO	'61
Wark, Stephen "Steve" J.	8 East Verde Vista DR, Thousand Oaks, CA 91360	RDD	'69
Williams, Ellis C.	2709 Humble RD, Missoula, MT 59801	ASSOCIATE-PILOT	
Yo nce, David "Dave" R.	PO Box 228, Lilliwaup, WA 98555	MSO	'62
Webb, Marsha	2706 W Jefferson, Boise, ID 83702	ASSOCIATE-Daughter of Wayne Webb, MYC	'46

## N.S.A.LIFE MEMBERSHIPS

.....

The National Smokejumper Association, as of April 17, 1998, now has 27 Life Members. They are: Keith L. Beartusk, MSO '68; Dave Bennett, MSO '61; James "Jim" E. Blaine, MSO '63; Fred O. Brauer, MSO '41; F. James "Jim" Clatworthy, MSO '56; George Cross, MSO '74; David "Dave" R. Cuplin, MSO '48; Robert "Bob" L. Derry, MSO '43; Charles "Chuck" Fricke, MSO '61; Orval W. Gastineau, MSO '63; George W. Gowen, MSO '54; Mike Greeson, MSO '59; Joseph "Joe" J. Gutkoski, MSO '50; Donal "Don" W. Halloran, MSO '53; Wallace "Wally" D. Henderson, MSO '46; Tom Kovalicky, MSO '61; Gerald "Jerry" J. Linton, MSO '48; Lee G. Lipscomb, MSO '58; Michael "Mike" D. McCullough, MSO '56; Jim Murphy, MSO '48; Robert "Bob" Quillin, FBX '71; Fred G. Rohrbach, MSO '65; Maynard Rost, MSO '58; Michael "Mike" D. Seale, Associate, Former Air America Pilot; H. W. "Skip" Stratton, MSO '47; Thomas "T. J." Thompson, MSO '55; Anonymous.

# LISTING OF DECEASED JUMPERS & PILOTS

This listing of deceased smokejumpers is new. Should dates and other material be incorrect, please let us know. Members of the NSA have been very helpful with providing timely information about the deaths of jumpers and pilots.

NAME	BASE YEAR	COMMENTS
------	-----------	----------

<p><b>LUFKIN, FRANCIS B.</b></p>	<p><b>NCSB '39</b></p>	<p>Francis passed away at the age of 83 on February 12, 1998 from viral pneumonia at the St. Francis Extended Health Care Center in Bellingham, Washington. He had been recovering from a stroke. He was born August 1, 1914 in Auburn, Washington to Grace (Moyer) Lufkin and Joseph Lufkin. He graduated from Winthrop High School in 1933. For several years he worked part-time for the U.S. Forest Service as a smokechaser and farm hand. He was also a logger and rancher. He was selected to assist in an experimental project to evaluate the feasibility of parachuting men and equipment to wilderness fires. During the experiment in October, 1939, held in the Winthrop, Washington area, Francis received only brief jump training and then made one jump. He and the other men in the experiment were the very first class of smokejumpers. In 1940 Francis and other Forest Service staff traveled to Missoula where they helped establish the first full-time smokejumper base. He returned to Winthrop to establish the North Cascades Smokejumper Base (NCSB). He made the first fire jump for the U.S. Forest Service's Region 6 on August 10, 1940.</p>
----------------------------------	------------------------	---

Francis managed the NCSB until May, 1972, when he retired after 33 years as a smokejumper. During that time, he received a citation from President Lyndon Johnson, and a Department of Agriculture Secretary's Award. He also received numerous other citations from the U.S. Forest Service. Three of Francis' children followed him into fire fighting. Ron, C J '60, and Larry C J '63, were smokejumpers for considerable periods of time. ("CJ" stands for Cave Junction, Oregon.) Joyce worked as a fire lookout for Washington State.

Francis is survived by Lola, his wife of 61 years, two sons Ron and Larry, a daughter Joyce, and a sister, Grace (Shamley) Oberg. He was preceded in death by his son Raymond and three brothers, Norman, Roy and Joseph. A private family service was held February 14, 1998 in Bellingham. A memorial service has been set for 10:00 a.m. May 2, 1998 at the smokejumper base located at the airfield out of Winthrop, Washington. It is hoped that Evergreen Aviation's Tri-motor, NC9645, will be there. Speakers at the service will be George Honey, NCSB '40; Jim Allen, NCSB '46; Bill Moody, NCSB '57; and Larry Lufkin, CJ '63. There will be an open house and luncheon at 1:00 p.m. Donations in Francis' name can be made to the Museum Fund, National Smokejumper Association, P.O. Box 4081, Missoula, Montana, 59806.

Francis will be deeply missed by many. He was a leader among men, greatly admired and respected, and a father figure for many smokejumpers.



*Francis standing by a Stinson Reliant Gullwing aircraft out of Winthrop in 1939. This was the first aircraft the Forest Service ever owned and was painted green with white trim.*

*Francis was suited up in a very bright red jumpsuit. He had just completed a brief training session and was about to board the aircraft for his first jump.*

*Francis' jumpsuit is currently on display at the SeaTac Airport, located between Seattle and Tacoma, along with other smokejumper items. The display will be removed by the first part of May.*

# LISTING OF DECEASED JUMPERS & PILOTS CONT.

(Continued from page 4)

This is a continuation of the listing of deceased jumpers and pilots through 4/12/98.

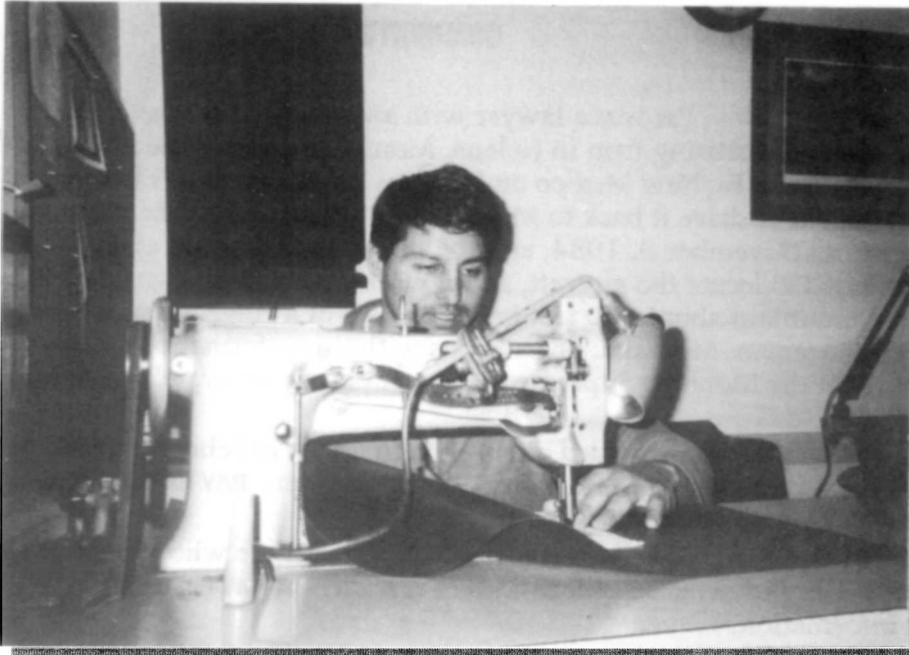
<b>NAME</b>	<b>BASE</b>	<b>YEAR</b>	<b>COMMENTS</b>
<b>HARRISON, PAT</b>	<b>MSO</b>	<b>'73</b>	Pat was a lawyer with an advanced degree in tax law. He became a corporate lawyer for an advertising firm in Helena, Montana. During the autumn of 1984 Pat had an opportunity to travel to Sante Fe, New Mexico on business. In addition, his firm had purchased a vehicle in that city, and he was to drive it back to Montana. Pat, with three other persons, flew out of Helena on a private aircraft on November 3, 1984, and the plane never arrived at its destination. Extensive search efforts failed to locate the aircraft, and it wasn't until late August, 1985, that the plane was found. It had hit a mountain about 300 feet below the top of a ridge, west of Santa Fe. <b>JOHN LAMMERS, "DOC", MSO '71-'76</b> , Bozeman, Montana, provided us with this information. Pat's father, John Harrison, a former Justice on the Montana Supreme Court, sent him a letter, telling of his son's death.
<b>MELLIN, DAVE,</b>	<b>FBX</b>	<b>'87</b>	Dave died during the first part of Februry, 1998, in Twin Falls, Idaho, where he had been residing. He was a Fairbanks, Alaska jumper. <b>RAY BROWN, MYC '87</b> , sent us that information and is checking on more details.
<b>THOMPSON, LAVELLE</b>	<b>MYC</b>	<b>'?</b>	Lavelle was a Forest Service retiree who passed away from cancer in Albuquerque in 1996. His widow, Rose, still resides in that city. <b>JIMMY HICKMAN, MSO '52</b> , Albuquerque, sent us that information.
<b>SCHANZ, KARY JOHN</b>	<b>MSO</b>	<b>'75</b>	Kary died October 29, 1987, the victim of an accidental gunshot by another person while hunting. Kary was helping drag a deer out when a fellow behind him stumbled, and his weapon discharged. Kary was 32 years old and a resident of the Ismay area, in southeastern Montana, about 35 miles from the North Dakota border. Kary was born in Harlowton northwest of Billings and attended Ryegate High School, and later, Montana State University at Bozeman. He had been a smokejumper for four years at Missoula and West Yellowstone. He married Cassie Campbell on October 6, 1979 in Miles City. They moved to the Campbell Ranch on the Powder River, southeast of Miles City, and lived there during the last eight years of his life. Kary is survived by his widow, a son Vaughn Jay, and a daughter Rosalie Anne. His mother resides at Juneau, Alaska. A brother, Kenny, is at Ryegate and three sisters live in Juneau. Two of Kary's brothers were also killed accidentally by guns in Montana. <b>RONDEY LAY, MSO '67</b> , residing at Florence, Montana, dropped off a copy of Kary's obituary. It included a poem, "I'm Free." Part of it reads as follows: "...I could not stay another day; to laugh, to love, to work or play. Tasks left undone must stay that way;...If my parting has left a void; then fill it with remembered joy..." Rondey grew up at Ryegate and was a close friend of Kary and his family. <b>JOHN LAMMERS, "DOC"</b> , also gave us some material relating to Kary's death.

**A REMINDER: THE E-MAIL ADDRESS FOR THE NATIONAL SMOKEJUMPER ASSOCIATION IS:**  
**[smokejumpers@smokejumpers.com](mailto:smokejumpers@smokejumpers.com)**

**THE ADDRESS FOR THE NATIONAL SMOKEJUMPER ASSOCIATION WEB PAGE IS:**  
**<http://www.smokejumpers.com>**

**ROGER SAVAGE, MSO '57, IS THE WEB MASTER.**

# SILK STORIES: Fractured Fables From the Fireline by CHARLIE PALMER, MSO '95, an Active Missoula Jumper. The column was originally started by SCOTT BELKNAP, MYC '83, also an active Missoula Jumper.



*Missoula Jumper Boyd Burtch, MSO '87, works on a project recently at the Aerial Fire Depot. Photo courtesy of Charlie Palmer.*

They sit hunched over the ancient sewing machines for hours on end. In assembly line fashion the workers deftly crank out one item after another. If these old Singers could talk, they would tell of their countless needles broken, of the miles of thread they have spewed, and of the blood and sweat that have slowly mixed with each's own machine oil. When the whistle blows, signalling the end of yet another workday, the workers gather their lunch boxes and other scant belongings for the long commute home. A Nike factory in Vietnam? Perhaps a Kathie Lee Gifford sweatshop in Indonesia? No, in this case, it's the Manufacturing Room at the Missoula Smokejumper Base.

On any given day, especially during the off-season from fire, you can almost always find jumpers here sewing something. Be it cranking out personal gear (PG) bags for various crews, constructing Tevlar jump suits, or just patching a hole in the favorite pair of work pants, the old machines never seem to be idle for long. "I would say that we have done close to 4,000 PG bags since we started making them," estimates Loft Foreman Jeff Kinderman.

For the thousands of tourists who visit the Aerial Fire Depot each year, the Manufacturing Room represents the first stop on the guided tour. While most of the visitors are completely surprised to learn that smokejumpers construct almost all of their own gear, they shouldn't be. Smokejumping and sewing have been virtually synonymous since the beginning of the Smokejumper Program. "Early

on, jumpers were the only ones parachuting. We needed to do the sewing in-house because we were the only ones who knew what was needed in terms of our gear," says Jim Beck, current Assistant Loft Foreman.

Although the hands running them may have changed many times over, the machines themselves have stayed remarkably constant. Their design dates as far back as 1914, and many of the Singers currently in use were manufactured somewhere around 1939-1940. Granted, far newer machines, like bar tackers and computer-programmed stitchers, are also in use at the Base. However, the lion's share of production and repair work is still done by these antique, but hardly antiquated, Singers.

When asked what it is that they enjoy about sewing, most jumpers mention the satisfaction and feeling of

accomplishment that comes from being able to produce quality goods. "Sewing is a wonderful skill, except when my wife wants a new zipper on her purse," noted jumper Scott Belknap. Andy Hayes, another member of the Missoula Sewing Club, simply states, "People who ask me about smokejumping are surprised when I tell them I spend more time behind a sewing machine than a pulaski.

*(Editor's note: There are 29 sewing machines at the Missoula Base.)*



*A Singer Model 121, four-needle sewing machine, at the Missoula Base, 1945. Photo courtesy of the U.S. Forest Service.*

# FRED GERLACH, HELICOPTER PILOT

Fred flew helicopters for the Johnson Flying Service out of Missoula for many years during the summers while he was a Professor of Forestry at the University of Montana.

He was from Versailles, Ohio, originally, a small town northwest of Columbus and not far from the Indiana border. After high school he enrolled in the forestry program at Ohio State for two years.

During his first year there a professor asked if he would like a summer job in Idaho working in the blister rust program. He applied and was

accepted. That first year he hitch-hiked from Columbus, Ohio to St Maries, Idaho. At Pocatello he was picked up by a man driving a big Packard. On the way to Boise, Fred said the fellow would stop on occasion and drive across fields to talk to farmers. At Boise Fred went to the bus station to get a little rest before trying to continue hitch-hiking. A police officer woke him up by tapping on his shoulder with a nightstick and said, "Son, you had better be waiting for a bus." Fred quickly checked his meager funds and found he had just barely enough for a bus ticket to St Maries. After arriving there the Forest Service took him in a truck to a trail in the Clarkia-Bovill area, dropped him off, and said the camp was five miles up the trail—his first introduction to the wilds of Idaho.

Several years later Fred was placed in charge of a tree examination program in the St Joe-St Maries area, which involved blister rust. They had to climb trees that were anywhere between 100-165

feet tall. He told of one fellow who accidentally came sliding down about 75 feet—"skinning the tree"—bouncing on a large limb, and coming to rest in a shocked, pained condition 50 feet up in the tree.

He enrolled at the University of Montana in the Forestry School and the Reserve Officers Training Program. In 1952 he graduated and was awarded a 2nd lieutenant's commission in the Army Corps of Engineers. He was at Fort Belvoir for awhile and then volunteered for the Army Aviation Program. He was at both Gary A.F. Base in Texas and Ft. Sill, Oklahoma several times for basic and tactical helicopter training. Later he was assigned to the 30th Engineer Topographic Group at San Francisco and from there was transferred to Alaska during the summer of 1954, flying helicopters in support of field crews who were doing mapping work. They were based out of Bethel and Fred said there were 45 helicopters and 20 fixed-wing aircraft involved in the program.

Fred left the military service in 1955 and did graduate work at the University of Montana.

In 1956 he started working summers for Bob Johnson and at times rode in the right seat of Tri-motors with Bob and Penn Stohr. He was a Professor of Forestry at the U of M from 1956 to 1994. He met his wife Marge at the University and they were married in 1952. She was originally from Vancouver, British Columbia. They have three children.

Fred had some interesting stories to tell of those days with the Johnson Flying Service. There was an incident that occurred along the East Fork of the Bitterroot in southwestern Montana on August 13th, 1960. The Missoula Sentinel on August 15 simply stated that two Forest Service employees were injured when dynamite misfired. There was much more to that story. It seems the trail crew was having trouble with bears, so they fixed a "mousetrap beartrap." An electric blasting cap was attached to a mousetrap, and bacon was set in the trap. When the bear tried to get the bait, it also tripped the trap. The mousetrap would flip shut, setting off the charge, killing the bear. Somehow, the men accidentally set off the dynamite while they were preparing the trap, and

*(Continued on page 8)*



*Fred in a Johnson Flying Service Bell 47G-3 in the mountains of Idaho.*

*Photo courtesy of Fred Brauer.*

# FRED GERLACH CONTINUED

*(Continued from page 7)*

both were injured, one seriously. (The bear must have gotten quite a charge out of that.)

Fred was working out of Sula in the general area at the time with a Bell 47J helicopter. During the evening of the 13th Fred was notified about the accident and told to conduct a rescue mission. The next day he flew in at daylight.

Smokejumpers, under Al Hammond, had dropped in the previous evening and cleared a helispot, which was in the bottom of a canyon at a high altitude. Fred took off from Sula with a low fuel load to compensate for the altitude. After loading the badly injured man—whose mouth was split open, had a chest full of holes and a missing eye—Fred found that he was not able to take off. The helicopter lacked adequate power. He then flew down to a nearby ranch and radioed for help. Rod Snider, another Johnson pilot, brought in a supercharged Bell 47G-3 'chopper, picked the man up and flew him to the ranch. Fred then took him in his helicopter to Hamilton, quickly refueled, and then flew on to St. Patrick Hospital in Missoula, landing on the highway, which police had blocked off.

Rod went back after the second Forest Service employee and flew him to the same hospital. Fred and Rod had saved the men a nine-mile litter trip over rocky terrain, which would have been a time-consuming ordeal. The bear? No one seems to know what happened to it. Probably took off for parts unknown.

(That same day, August 14, another helicopter picked up an injured smokejumper, Paul Nordwall of Falls Church, Virginia, who had sustained a leg injury when parachuting to a fire in rough country of Wyoming, and flew him to St. Patrick Hospital. We do not know where Paul is at now. Do any of you?)

Fred was also involved in helicopter operations just after the Madison Canyon Earthquake took place near Ennis, Montana in southwestern Montana on August 17, 1959. There were many injuries and deaths. Fred flew mission after mission helping evacuate them. (Smokejumpers also took part, parachuting to the area early on the morning of August 18th.)

The day after rescue operations commenced, Fred flew a geologist with strain gauges to the top of a ridge where the slide had started. He then flew dam experts over the affected area, among other aerial flights. *(Your editor came upon an*

*article in the Missoula Sentinel, dated 10/23/60, which stated, in part: "Fred Gerlach of Missoula was presented the Montana State Pilots Association's 'Pilot of the Year' award Friday night at a dinner meeting of the Missoula Hanger...The award came as the result of Gerlach's helicopter service during rescue operations at the Yellowstone Park earthquake disaster area..."*)

During 1957 Fred was flying a Bell 47J helicopter to a lookout station south of Magruder in the Salmon River country on an inspection trip with Stan Greenup, Alternate Ranger at the Magruder District. The lookout was at 8,000' and it was the first time Fred had flown helicopters in high mountain country. He came in high and fast, but the helicopter didn't stop in a hover like it should have. The tailrotor guard missed a rock, but the tailrotor hit it. They were stranded. Dean Logan, flying for Johnson, flew over in a Twin Beech and dropped emergency supplies and food to last three days. Swede Nelson then flew a Bell G2 in with a new tail rotor. Swede flew the repaired chopper back to Missoula and Fred took Greenup back to Magruder in the G2.

Fred told of the time he was at Magruder



*Fred sitting in a Bell 47G-3-helicopter with a smokejumper prior to dropping him during trials at Magruder. Fred Brauer is standing at the left.  
Photo courtesy of Fred Brauer.*

*(Continued on page 9)*



# FRED GERLACH CONTINUED

*(Continued from page 8)*

doing experimental work with smokejumpers. They would suit up, but without parachutes. Fred would fly close to the ground to a chosen location, the fire gear would be tossed out, and the jumpers would exit from about five feet.

Fred Brauer, the Missoula Base Manager, was in charge. A light was mounted on the front of the right skid. When Fred was set up with the helicopter on the proper approach, he would turn the light on, but that was not the signal to jump. Fred said Bill Demmons, MSO '51, Project Director, was on-board once when the light went on. Through a mixup in communications Bill jumped immediately from an altitude of about 30 feet. He landed on soft ground, but one heel was severely bruised and the heels of both White boots were ripped off. Fred Brauer ran over to him, expecting to find Bill with at least a broken leg.

Fred was involved in a number of rescue operations through the years. He recalled one incident that took place in the Bob Marshall Wilderness Area when a hunter, with a .44 revolver strapped to his side, was sneaking up on some elk. While he was crawling through the brush, the trigger of his revolver was tripped and the gun went off. The bullet went in behind one knee and exited through the ankle of the hunter. Fred was dispatched from the Johnson Flying Service with a helicopter and took Jack Nash—long-time Missoula jumper and rigger—along. The injured hunter had to be packed on an improvised stretcher one mile by members of a smokejumper rescue team to a spot where Fred had landed. By the time the rescue group arrived it was pitch black. Fred had the jumpers place themselves in a line out in front of the 'chopper and light their zippo's, so he could judge his takeoff. It was about five miles to the



*An example of some of the rough terrain in the area southwest of Missoula in Idaho. The experiments conducted at Magruder—dropping jumpers from helicopters close to the ground—were conducted in the search for possible answers for fighting fires in terrain such as this, which has caused serious injuries to parachuting smokejumpers. The idea did not work out.*

*Photo courtesy of Fred Brauer.*

Big Prairie Ranger Station. With Jack on-board, the center of gravity was not evenly balanced, but Fred managed to stagger into the air and get to Big Prairie. The following day he flew the suffering hunter to Missoula.

In another episode, Fred was flying a fire boss to check out a fire south of Superior, Montana. There was a high wind coming up the ridge so Fred was gliding and circling about. Suddenly, the 'chopper lost power. He had to perform an autorotation and managed to land along a switchback on a mountain road, without any damage to the helicopter. The fire boss was trucked back to Missoula and was not at all happy about the situation, Fred said. It was the fellow's first time as a fire boss. A part was brought in from Missoula and the helicopter was repaired and flown out by Fred.

These are only a few of Fred's very interesting and hazardous experiences as a Johnson Flying Service pilot. There will be more stories about Fred at another time.

# JOHN CARVER, MSO '46

John L. "Jack" Carver passed away at the Montana Veterans Home in Columbia Falls on Jan. 27, 1998 from recurring brain tumors. He was born in Hamilton 2/22/23 to Leo Lyle and Mary Ellen Hughes Carver. He attended schools at Darby and after high school entered the U.S. Navy on 11/42, serving for four years. Following military service Jack attended the University of Montana and Montana State University. He was a smokejumper during the 1946 season out of Missoula. He married Letta Harper in Missoula on 12/10/49. He entered business and at one time owned the Kalispell News Agency, and then became a real estate broker. Later, he purchased the Great Falls Beer Distributorship in Kalispell, and renamed it the Carver Distributing Co., which he owned until his retirement.

Jack was an avid fisherman and floated many of the rivers in the Flathead Valley.

He was preceded in death by his parents, wife, and one brother, James Daly Carver. He is survived by daughters Barbara Carver of Kalispell and Diane Anderson of Minneapolis; three sons, Richard and Robert Carver of Kalispell and Timothy of Tucson; two sisters, Anna Mary Van Blaricom of Proctor, Montana and Barbara Reinhold of Yuma, Arizona; and one brother, William "Bill" Carver, a long-time Missoula jumper.

During WW II Jack became an Aviation Radioman 1st Class and was with Bombing Squadron 14, flying from the carrier U.S.S. Wasp, during the Second Battle of the Philippines. The pictures below pertain to that battle—10/26/44—during which Jack won the Silver Star for courageous devotion to duty. His other awards were the Navy Unit Commendation Ribbon and the Air Medal.

Pacific Fleet Communique No. 168, issued 10/29/44, reported, in part: "Japan's newest and fastest battleship, the Yamato, felt the vengeance of the United States Navy when Lieutenant Commander Arthur L. Downing of South Haven Michigan and Aviation Radioman Second Class John L. Carver of Hamilton, Montana dove on it in a Curtiss Helldiver and dropped two bombs just forward of No. 1 gun turret...Breaking through intense antiaircraft fire screening the Yamato, Downing and Carver zoomed in at exceptionally low altitude to drop their bombs...Carver took his picture of the Yamato with a hand-held camera while his plane was pulling out of an exceptionally steep dive."



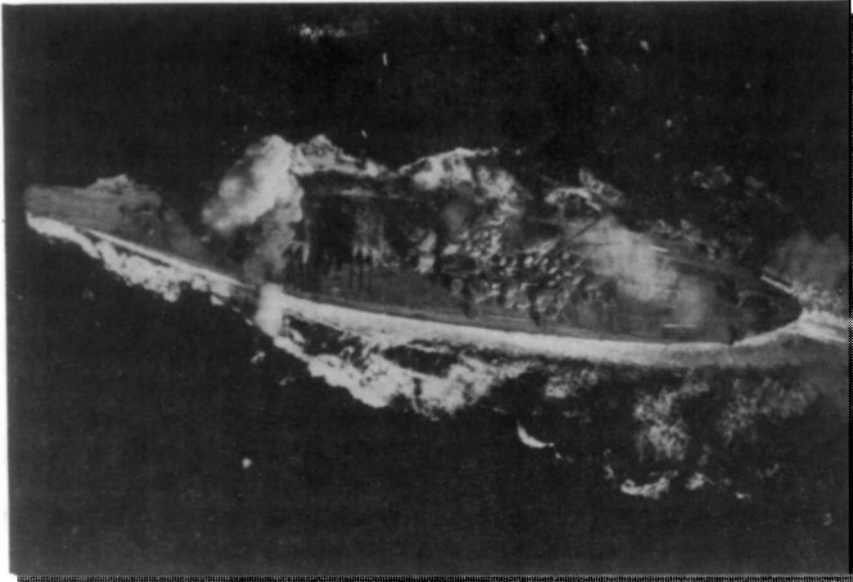
*Radioman Second Class Jack Carver, age 21, seated behind twin .50 cal. machine guns in his SB2-C Curtiss Helldiver Dive Bomber aboard the U.S.S. Carrier CV 18, the Wasp, an Essex Class Carrier. The picture was taken just after he and Lt. Cmdr. Downing had returned from the strike on the new Japanese superbattleship, the Yamato, on 12/26/44, during the Second Battle of the Philippines. Jack was with Bombing Squadron 14 (VB 14) and was a radio-gunner. His squadron boarded the Wasp in 1943 and Jack stayed with the carrier for his entire tour, leaving it and VB 14 in November, 1944. He then entered pilot training but the war ended prior to the completion of that training and Jack was discharged in September, 1945.*

*Photo courtesy of Jack's daughter, Barbara Carver, of Kalispell, Montana.*

*(Continued on page 11)*

# JOHN CARVER, MSO '46, CONTINUED

(Continued from page 10)



A picture of the new Japanese superbattleship Yamato just after being hit by two bombs from Jack's SB2-C Curtiss Helldiver Dive Bomber of Squadron VB 14 on October 26, 1944. The hits are just forward of number 1 turret.

Jack and his pilot, Lieutenant Commander Arthur Downing, were just climbing out after bombing from a steep angle. Jack took the picture with his hand-held camera.

Note the large number of antiaircraft batteries towards the center of the battleship and the three heavy gun turrets.

The original photo is in the U.S. Navy Department's National Archives.

Photo courtesy of Barbara Carver.



Left to right: Lt. Cmdr Arthur Downing and John "Jack" Carver standing by their SB2-C Curtiss Helldiver dive bomber on the deck of the U.S.S. Wasp (CV 18) just after landing following their bombing of the Japanese battleship Yamato. The Curtiss Helldiver has 45 bombing missions painted on its right side.

Photo courtesy of Barbara Carver.



Jack's SB2-C on display at the Naval Aviation Air Museum at Pensacola, Florida. Notice the name John Carver on the fuselage just below the canopy.

There had been a reunion at Pensacola among those who once served with Bombing Squadron VB 14 on the U.S.S. Wasp. Those in the picture are, left to right: Rafferty, John ; On Wing, Unknown; and DeJow. Larry Povich took the picture and mailed a print to Jack.

Photo courtesy of Barbara Carver.

# JON H. MCBRIDE, MSO '54, NSA TREASURER

Jon took over as the new NSA Treasurer early in 1998. He was born and raised in Springfield, Missouri and became fascinated with Forest Service activities at a very early age. At fifteen he coerced his reluctant parents into signing a permission slip, allowing him to come to Montana where he worked in the "Blister Rust Program" in the old Cabinet National Forest of northwestern Montana. Two fire seasons later (1954) he found himself in Missoula at the new Aerial Fire Depot, which had just begun operations that year.

Jumping from the Ford's and Travel Air's only increased his interest in aviation. In 1956 he chose



to make aviation his career and commenced flight training at the Naval Air Station at Pensacola, Florida. Upon completion of that program, he was stationed at Moffet Field NAS near Mountain View, southeast of San Francisco, and was later transferred to the Miramar NAS at San Diego.

Jon's eight years in the Navy included two six-months deployments to West Pac (South China Sea) aboard the U.S.S. Bon Homme Richard—CVA-31. ("A" in CVA stands for "Attack Carrier.") During that time he accumulated 300 carrier landings while flying the hot, new Vought F8U Crusader, a single-engine, single-seat, jet fighter plane.

Jon left the Navy in 1965

to join Mobil Oil Corporation as a corporate pilot, based out of Westchester County Airport in White Plains, New York. In 1978 he was assigned to the position of Aviation Manager, in charge of the busy Mobil Aircraft Operation in Singapore, which serviced Indonesia and Southeast Asia.

He and his family returned to the United States in 1986 and he assumed the position of Aviation Manager for the Mobil Corporation's very active, world-wide, aircraft operations in Saudi Arabia, Singapore, Russia, Kazahstan, China, Nigeria, and the North Sea, among other areas.

Jon elected to retire in 1996 in order to get back to "God's Country," where, for him, it all began. He is now back with old friends and the relaxed life style of skiing, hunting, fishing, hiking, biking and camping, which he always enjoyed, but was unable to take advantage of during his career years in aviation.

In Jon's own words, "I always wanted to return to Missoula, and as soon as the chance presented itself, I came back as fast as I could."

Jon is married to the former Patricia Ann "Trish" Walsh whom he met while stationed at Moffet Field in California. They have one son, Jon Matthew, who is a screen and television writer.

(Continued on page 13)

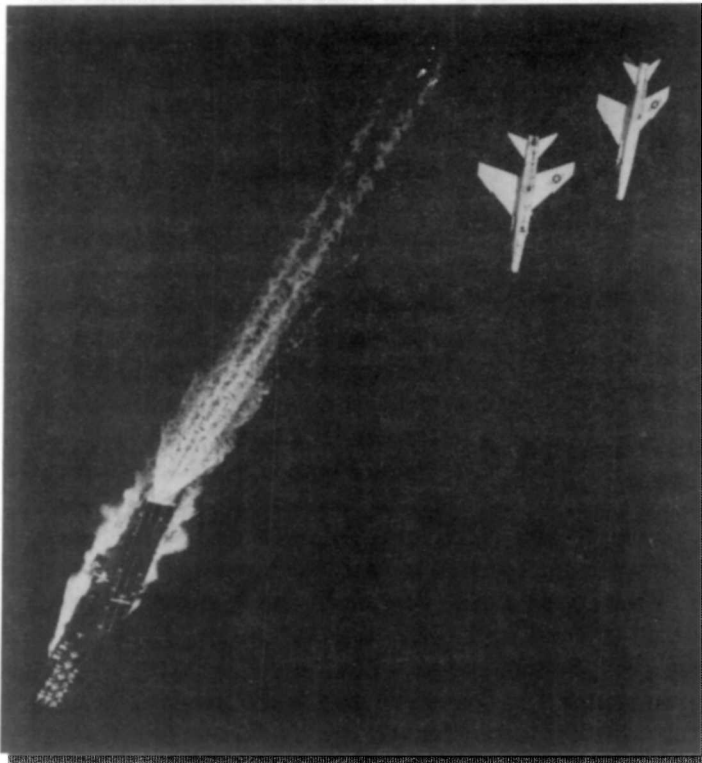
# JON MCBRIDE, NSA TREASURER, CONTINUED

*(Continued from page 12)*



*Lieutenant Jon McBride is standing by his Vought F8U fighter at Fallon, Nevada, 25 miles east of Reno, where he was undergoing gunnery practice (air-to-air) in 1960.*

*Note the brown grease around the gunports for the two 20 mm Colt cannon on the left of the nose and the Sidewinder missile location near the star on the fuselage. The grease was applied before firing practice and made it much easier to clean the aircraft afterwards.*



*Lieutenant Jon McBride on the left, with his wingman. They have their Vought F8U-1's in an inverted flyover of CVA-31 and were starting a supersonic vertical approach with afterburners on, which really got the skipper's attention. His fighter unit, VF 191, was known as "Satan's Kittens." At this time they were in the South China Sea at a position known as "Yankee Station." Navy and Marine pilots refer to their carriers as "Boats."*

*Photos on this page courtesy of Jon McBride.*



*Vought F8U fighters from Jon's unit, VF 191, in the South China Sea area. Jon is in the nearest F8U-1*

*The F8U prototype was produced in 3/12/55 and during its testing exceeded the speed of sound in level flight. The first production model came out in 9/20/55 and versions of it reached U.S. Navy operational squadrons during 3/57.*

*On 3/21/56 an F8U set the first U.S. national speed record of more than 1,000 mph. On 7/16/57 a reconnaissance version of the F8U set the first supersonic U.S. transcontinental record by flying from Los Angeles to New York City in three hours, 22 minutes and 50 seconds at an average speed of 723.52 mph. John Glenn, a Marine Corps pilot, and later one of the early astronauts, was the pilot.*

# IDAHO CITY SMOKEJUMPER BASE CONT.

*This is Part 2 of material concerning the former Idaho City Smokejumper Base that existed northeast of Boise. Most of the material and pictures have been provided by Smokey Stover, McCall, '46, who was Base Manager.*

*In the Jan. 1998 issue of The Static Line we left off with the year 1949 in the history of the base. In 1950 the fire season was short and wet. Six*

was again chief pilot. Higby and Ikelberger from the Bradley Flying Service out of Boise were checked out to drop jumpers from the firm's Travel Air, NC8865, and assisted Hartnett.

The Idaho City newspaper on 8/27/53 said: "Smokejumper training paid off in a rather unusual way on Thursday afternoon when four jumpers from Idaho City dropped near Martin

Peak on the Challis N.F. to assist lookout Rennaker, who had been stricken with appendicitis. Roger Taynton, Jack Coburn, Bob Caldwell and Taylor Cottle were the aerial callers, with Cottle administering medical attention under radioed doctor's instructions.

Clare Hartnett returned the Forest Service plane to Idaho City after the drop mission was completed. So once again the jumpers earned their salt."

In 1954 Jim "Smokey" Stover officially became the first jumper foreman for Idaho City.

Clare Hartnett did not return and Karl Bryning was the new pilot for the Noorduyn. The Bradley Flying Service Travel Air was flown by Ikelberger during the busy days. Drift streamers replaced drift chutes for the first time.

The Idaho City base expanded to 20 jumpers in 1955. Two

young "Neds", Clarence Teichert and Kenn Smith, began their careers as smokejumpers.

There was a plane crash in the McDonald Creek area of the Challis N.F. Clyde Hawley, Dick Hensel, Bob Payne and Clarence Teichert parachuted to the scene and were later complimented by the receiving doctor and Forest Supervisor for their work. Hawley, Jim Barron, Bob Payne and Kenn Smith made another rescue jump that season.

Eight Idaho City jumpers joined 100 other jumpers on the Lost Packer Lake Fire on the Salmon.

The Idaho City jumpers dropped from five different types of aircraft in 1955.



*Idaho City Smokejumpers at their base during the summer of 1960. Front Row, left to right: 1. Smokey Stover with dog; 2. ? ; 3. Clarence Teichert;*

*4. Bill Wakeman; 5. Lamonte Christensen; 6. ? .*

*Middle Row, left to right: 1. Kenn Smith; 2. Gordon Livingston—on crutches, fell when the top of a tree gave way; 3. Fred Rensmeyer;*

*4. Harvey Hardin; 5. Jeff Burnside; 6. Ronald Gibbens; 7. ? ; 8. ? .*

*Back Row, left to right: 1. Randolph "Toby" Scott; 2. Earl Pederson; 3. ? ;*

*4. Dick Graham; 5. Harry Clark; 6. Jerry Costello.*

McCall smokejumpers went to the Idaho City base to give some of ICB jumpers a vacation in McCall. There were 75 jumps on 27 fires.

1951 was a short, busy fire season. The "candy striped" FS-2 parachutes were used by the Idaho City jumpers for the first time. Thirty-three fires required 85 jumps. Dave Schas made the first out-of-region jump for the unit when he dropped on a fire out of Deming, New Mexico in Region 3.

Ray Lukes and Clare Hartnett were the pilots flying the Noorduyn Norseman that year.

During 1952 there were seven new men in the 12-man crew (known as "NEDS" at McCall).

Region 4 had a long, hot fire season in 1953 and the unit expanded to 15 jumpers. Hartnett

# IDAHO CITY SMOKEJUMPER BASE CONT.

(Continued from page 14)

A news article in a Boise, Idaho paper, dated Sept., 1956, commented: "A new, key member of Region 4 of the U.S.F.S. in this daring, important work (smokejumping) is Beechcraft's largest and most powerful transport, the twin-engine Super 18. The first Super 18 to be used in smokejumping was delivered recently to Region 4. It will take its place alongside many Beechcraft C-45's (and AT-11's), wartime versions of the Model 18, which were ordered into smokejumping duty last year. Karl Bryning, Region 4 Forest Service pilot, paid tribute to the performance of the Beechcraft Model 18 when he accepted delivery of the first 'Super' for the Forest Service..."

During January, 1956 a group of smokejumpers and Forest Service personnel had met with officials of the Beechcraft Aircraft Corporation at Wichita, Kansas to discuss production of a special Twin Beech for smokejumper use in Region 4, which included both the Idaho City and McCall bases in Idaho.

One of those in attendance was Al Hammond, who was the Parachute Technician for the Missoula base at the time. He provided this information: "At the meeting, which lasted several days, discussions centered around changes in the structure of the aircraft for smokejumper purposes. The floor of the aircraft was to have a

door flush with the floor, to allow cargo to be kicked out. The floor design was to be made of light weight, honeycomb material to support heavy cargo loads. A cargo dropper's (kicker's) cable was needed, to which he would be fastened while kicking out cargo, plus a line was needed for static lines to be hooked to. Other equipment included a cargo kicker's horn, for the pilot to signal the kicker, and spotter's signal lights for signaling the pilot. On the Beech Super 18 a spotter's door was placed aft of the regular door. These modifications were made at Wichita prior to the aircraft departing for Region 4."

During the 1956 season Eugene Marker and Richard Hanks both broke ankles while parachuting.

Idaho City jumpers had a good fire season during 1957, with many small fires to combat. Also, they flew to nearby forests. Kenn Smith made 14 fire jumps in New Mexico while on detail there.

For three days Idaho City dropped jumpers on the Lincoln Lake Fire on the Challis N.F. Clarence Teichert broke an ankle on a fire jump. Clyde Hawley, Dick Hanks and Nathan Yost each jumped one-man fires.

(Continued on page 16)



Seated, left to right: Smokey Stover; Murry Butler, Region 4 Purchasing Officer; Boyd Rasmussen, Region 4 Fire Chief—His son John became a jumper out of McCall; Karl Bryning, Chief Pilot, Region 4, deceased; Herb Harris, First Director of the Missoula Equipment Development Center—now known as the Missoula Technology & Development Center. He is deceased.

Standing, left to right: E.J. Rybak, Program Administrator for the Beechcraft Corporation; Wm. "Mason" Shehan, in charge of Beechcraft Public Relations; Bill Wood, in charge of Equipment Development for Aircraft and Parachutes. and long-time Missoula jumper;

Al Hammond, Parachute Technician at the Missoula base and also a veteran smokejumper.

Photographs courtesy of Smokey Stover.

# IDAHO CITY SMOKEJUMPER BASE CONT.

*(Continued from page 15)*

In 1958 Smokey Stover and Kenn Smith earned pins for having made 100 jumps during their smokejumper careers and in 1959 Clarence Teichert was awarded a 50-jump pin.

During 1959 the FS-2 parachute replaced the last of the FS-1's.

The first fire jump was on July 16th to the Sawtooth area and the last one was on August 28th. The Idaho City jumpers parachuted to 33 fires, making 88 fire jumps (crew of 20, which included seven new men). A Twin Beech E-18 and a Noorduyn Norseman were used as jump ships.

While Thorn Creek and other large fires were burning on the Idaho City and Cottonwood Districts during the 1960 season, the smokejumpers filled in for depleted district forces. They were set up as a pumper crew to protect private dwellings and a school house. Borate was used for fire suppression and showed excellent results. Terry Lewton was awarded a 50-jump pin.

In 1961 Harry Clark, Fred Rensmeyer, Earl Pedersen and Dick Graham earned their 50-jump pins. As in 1960, two Twin Beech's were used. The nylon suit replaced the old canvas jump suits. The FS-5 and FS-5A parachutes continued to take the place of overage FS-2's.

The severity of the 1962 fire season did not reach that of the previous five seasons. Smokey filmed a Deployment Bag Study for the Missoula Development Center. Dick Graham, Bob Montoya, Gene Hobbs and George Smith made a rescue jump on a plane crash on the Middle Fork of the Salmon River, but the occupants were dead.

The 1963—1964 fire seasons were light to normal. In 1964 contract aircraft were used for the first time—a Twin Beech and a Cessna 206.

Benny Ortiz earned a 50-jump pin and Clarence Teichert a 100-jump pin.

1965 was a tragic year. McCall's Twin Beech



*Idaho City jumpers, 1959, in front of their Super 18 Twin Beech. Front Row, left to right: 1. ? ; 2. Jim Wakeman; 3. Kenn Smith—with cigarette; 4. Clarence Teichert; 5. Smokey Stover; 6. Lamonte Christensen.*

*Back Row, left to right: 1. Gordon Livingston; 2. Fred Rensmeyer; 3. Jeff Burnside—face showing; 4. Jerry Costello—with beret and plaid shirt; 5. Reed Shinn; 6. Harry Clark?; 7. ? ; 8. Harvey Hardin; 9. Dick Graham; 10. ? ; 11. Randolph "Toby" Scott; 12. ? .*

crashed on July 9th and took the life of Squad Leader Ken Salyer and the pilot, Byron Knapp. Clarence Teichert, Marion Horton, Wayne Sugg and Dick Graham jumped this tragedy, but there was nothing they could do. Ken and the pilot had been killed instantly.

Robert Montoya had made 50 jumps and Harry Clark 100. They were awarded pins.

1966 proved to be a high fire season with high temperatures and low humidity, which caused the two-to-four-man smokejumper fires to become four-to-eight-man conflagrations very shortly. On August 4th only Bill Rember, Jim Weaver and John Cramer were left in camp, and they were soon dispatched to a fire on Charter's Mountain near Garden Valley, which roared through heavy timber for several weeks.

Kenn Smith became the first Idaho City jumper to make 150 jumps.

*The Idaho City Smokejumper Base History will be continued in the July, 1998 Newsletter.*



# GRANGEVILLE, IDAHO, 1960

Benny Mitchell, who first jumped out of Missoula in 1960, and now lives at Sitka, Alaska, sent us this picture of the Grangeville crew that year.

He said that prior to his training in the spring of 1960 he had never ridden in an airplane. He had never been off the ground. He said he was scared \_\_\_\_\_ about the looming act that he was about to begin doing. Benny had wanted to be a smokejumper since the days when he read a book about them, and was very determined that he would become one.

He said he was ashamed to admit to the other rookies that he had never flown before and kept that secret to himself until the day of his first practice jump. Later, on the ground after a perfect roll, he told the "Drill Sergeant," "Big Bob" Nicol, the story, and everyone else around.

In his rookie class, he was the only one who had made his first airplane ride and first parachute jump, all on the same flight.

In the picture is Travel Air N447W. That aircraft is now the property of Delta Airlines and is in storage at Atlanta, Georgia.



*Benny wrote in locations where the jumpers came from in 1960. Left to Right, front row: Fred Cavill, Foreman, Ryegate, MT; Jim Barber, Ronan, MT; Joe Wright, Hazard, KY; Reed Harrison, La Point, UT; Dave Tranberg, Ryegate, MT; Roy Williams, Hamilton, MT; Russ Kapitz, Rib Lake, WI; Dave Morton, Oak Ridge, TN.*

*Left to Right, back row: Dean Logan, Pilot, Missoula; Ron Reintsma, Huntley, MT; Ted Nyquest, Boulder, MT; Benny Mitchell, Carthage, TX; Frank Kibbee, Alberton, MT; Paul Tag, Missoula, MT; Tom Schroeder, Milwaukee, WI; Bill Robertson, Mitchell, SD; Jim Lehfeltdt, Ass't Foreman, Ryegate, MT.*

*John Mathis, Salt Lake City, UT and Robert Cue, Missoula, MT are not shown. Dean Logan and Reed Harrison are deceased.*

*We do not know the whereabouts of Russ Kapitz, Dave Morton, Ron Reintsma, Bill Robertson, Bob Cue or John Mathis. Do any of you? If so, please let us know. Most of those in the picture are members of the NSA. Of those whose addresses we have, only one, Frank Kibbee, still lives in the area where he was living in 1960.*

## CHUTE THE BREEZE



*The Sportsman Club at Dixie—ice cold pop and beer, sandwiches and coffee. Photo's courtesy of Wally Dobbins MSO '47.*

*Dixie, Idaho in the 40's. Many jumpers passed through here after fire jumps and when working on projects. It is 25 miles south of Elk City by road and 10 air miles north of Mackay Bar, where the South Fork of the Salmon runs into the main Salmon River. It is in the Nez Perce N.F. and quite isolated. It is an old mining area.*

17



*The old Dixie Store. The town is still there. Jumpers through the years have many fond memories of Dixie. The sign to the left of the door says "Telephone." (Continued on page 18)*

# CHUTE THE BREEZE, CONTINUED

(Continued from page 17)



*Left to right, Laird Robinson, NSA President; Roger Savage; and Carl Gidlund at the NW Jumpers Rendezvous in North Idaho, March 14, 1998. Photos courtesy of Mrs. Wolfrum.*

Robinson and his presentation of the Association's 18th Life Membership plaque to associate member Mike "Black Dragon" Seale, a former Air America pilot.

Bob Salee, last surviving member of the Mann Gulch Fire of 1949 that killed 12 jumpers and a forest recreation guard, who was a former jumper, was there.

If other members would like to sponsor similar events, Carl Gidlund has an extensive collection of videos for loan. Contact Carl at

(208) 772-8299, or e-mail address, [sncgidlund@nidlink.com](mailto:sncgidlund@nidlink.com).



## **BOISE JUMPER BASE**

*Walt Wasser, MYC '79, proves that you have to be careful where you sit down when doing a pack out in the Great Basin. Cactus was abundant in the area. Note bur attached to Walt's backside. Picture was believed to have been taken in the late 1980's or 1990 in the Glenwood Springs BLM District of Colorado. Photo courtesy of Mark Klinger, AKA '79.*



## **RUGGED COUNTRY OF THE NORTH CASCADES IN NW WASHINGTON**



*Walt Reimer and others were flown to the fire in a Ford Tri-motor from Missoula. Cave Junction, Oregon jumpers were there also, and they flew in the Army ship the picture was taken from—note the star on the wing. The fire was above Lake Chelan in the North Cascades, some of the toughest jump country in the nation.*

*Left to Right: Bert Mitman, RAC '70; Sean Cross, AKA '88—present Boise Base Manager; and Craig Irvine, RDD '75, having a high level conference at the Boise Base, 1987.*

*(AKA-Ft Wainwright, Alaska; RAC-Redmond Air Center, Redmond, Oregon; RDD-Redding, California.)*

*Photo courtesy of Mark Klinger, AKA '79.*

*John Scott, MSO '44, Fergus Falls, Minnesota, sent us this picture. Walt Remier, MSO '44, gave him the picture some years ago. The Cave Junction, Oregon jumpers had run out of planes and had to borrow an Army Air Force C-47 from Spokane. Jumpers landed in the saddle to the upper left of the fire. John said, "I'll bet they would let this type of fire burn itself out now. Right?"*

*(Continued on page 19)*

# CHUTE THE BREEZE, CONTINUED

(Continued from page 18)

## CHUCK VIVIANO, WEST YELLOWSTONE AND MSO '53



Chuck, living at Cypress, California out of Los Angeles, and a retired fire captain, is one of our strongest supporters. Among other things, he has paid for three memberships in our Association and has contributed much material and a number of pictures. Photo courtesy of Chuck.

Communications Platoon, Headquarters Co., 325th Airborne Infantry Regiment, 82d Airborne Division, Fort Bragg, NC, 2/14/50. Chuck Viviano, West Yellowstone and MSO '53, is standing third from the right. Note the size of the general purpose bag that he jumped with just shortly after this picture was taken.

On that jump PFC Harry Clark, standing at extreme right, broke a leg in three places—high wind.

Cpl Brannon, at left, kneeling, dislocated his shoulder. The chaplain was injured and another corporal broke a leg. Three in the picture are now deceased. 1st Sgt Russ Brami, kneeling at the right, was wounded three times in WW II and twice in Korea while serving with Airborne units. He later lost a hand in an explosives accident in Panama, but retired as a major.



The old jump tower at McCall. It was used through the 1950's. The door at the lower level is in the shape of a Ford Tri-motor door.

Photos courtesy of McCall—from the base's 50th Anniversary Calendar, 1943-1993. The calendar was for June 1993 through May 1994

## MCCALL, IDAHO

"What are you doing up there, enjoying the scenery?"  
"You had better start steering that chute, and I mean now!"  
One of McCall's overhead using the bullhorn during training at McCall in the early days.



## BOISE, U.S. FOREST SERVICE, IN THE 1970'S



Clarence "Tei" Teichert, former Idaho City and Boise (U.S. Forest Service) jumper spotting from a Douglas C-47 while at Boise between 1970-1979. He is deceased.

# CANADIAN SMOKEJUMPERS, SMITHERS, BRITISH COLUMBIA, 1998

Many smokejumpers and pilots do not know that Canadian Smokejumper history dates back to days at Prince Albert, Saskatchewan, around 1942-1949, and that those Canadian jumpers trained at Missoula. Even more unknown is the history of the Canadian jumpers who were based at Fort Simpson, Northwest Territories, where the Liard River flows into the Mackenzie, east of the Selwyn Mountains.



*Missoula Smokejumper Base, Wed., April 15, 1998.*

*Left to right: Canadian Jumpers Pete Lainge & Tom Reinboldt, Smithers, B.C. Base Manager, talking to Jim Beck, Missoula's Assistant Loft Foreman.*

International Forest Fire Systems (IFFS) had a contract with the Northwest Territories government for a smokejumper program, which existed from 1976-1979. Kusawa Contracting took over from 1980-1981 at Fort Simpson. The aircraft used in that operation were a Twin Beech and a Twin Islander (produced by the Britain Norman firm). In 1981 Northwest Territories said it was no longer interested in a smokejumper program.

One of those who jumped out of Fort Simpson was Mark Fletcher, who has been a member of our Association since 1993. He had taken jump training in 1978 at a facility operated by IFFS at Revelstoke, British Columbia—about 200 air miles west of Calgary, Alberta. However, there weren't any fire jumps that year. In 1979 he took rappelling training and in 1980 took smokejumper training as a "real rookie" at Fort Simpson.

In 1984 the Yukon Territory Smokejumper Program began, and was based at Whitehorse, the provincial capital, with a Douglas DC-3 aircraft. It too was under a private contractor. Mark was there from 1986-1993 and was base manager from 1990-1993. The Yukon operation lasted through the summer of 1995.

The Alaska and Canadian jumpers were closely united, in that some Yukon jumpers took training at Fort Wainwright,

and Alaska jumpers were in Whitehorse at times. The two jumper units had an agreement about fighting fires some miles across the border in each other's territory, and at times Canadian and Alaska jumpers fought fires side by side.

During the period 1981-1986 Mark did much rappelling from Bell 206 Long Range helicopters in British Columbia. From 1993 to the present time, Mark has been "Bird Dogging," flying in lead aircraft to help guide air tankers to safe routes and approaches to fires.

Mark and four other experienced Canadian jumpers, who are undergoing refresher training at the Missoula base this spring, as this article is being written, have helped convince the British Columbia provincial authorities that smokejumpers are needed. The program will be under B.C. governmental control, and not private contractors, as previously done in Western Canada. Jim Dunlop, Director of Protection (forests), based in Victoria, B.C., is the top authority and the one who said "let's do it." The jump ship will be a Shorts Sky Van and Mark will be acting as spotter, as well as being an active jumper. The base is located at Smithers, British Columbia along Highway 16, which runs from Prince George to Prince Rupert. Smithers is situated between the Bulkly Ranges and the Skeena Mountains.

Tom Reinboldt, who was a Canadian jumper from 1989 to 1995, will be base manager. In addition to Mark and Tom, experienced jumpers Pete Lainge, Dan McBee and Jeff Strange will assist as overhead. For the first year of the operation there will be 20 rookies, or new men. In the future there could be some cross-the-border exchanges of American and Canadian jumpers on fires. That would be good to see.

The American jumpers found the Canadians to be a very friendly, congenial group, who took jumper refresher training very



*Canadian Jumper Mark Fletcher, former Yukon Territory Base Manager, standing outside the N.S.A. Headquarters at Hanger 24, Missoula County Airport.*

seriously. This week they first jumped on April, 15 near the Missoula base, from

a DC-3-C, and gave a good account of themselves. They depart for Canada on Saturday, April, 18.