

THE STATIC LINE

NATIONAL SMOKEJUMPER
ASSOCIATION

P.O. BOX 4081

Missoula, Montana 59806-4081

Tel. (406) 549-9938

E-mail: smokejumpers@smokejumpers.com

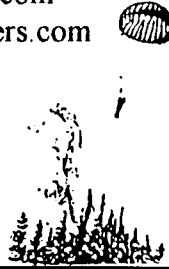
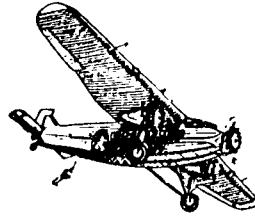
Web Address: <http://www.smokejumpers.com>

FAX Number: 1-406-549-9938

Forwarding Return Postage

Guaranteed, Address Correction

Requested



NON PROFIT ORG.
U.S. POSTAGE

PAID

MISSOULA, MT
PERMIT NO. 321

Volume 3

Quarterly

July 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

On behalf of the Officers and Board of Directors, I would like to welcome our new members to the Association. I would also like to give a sincere thanks to all who have joined the prestigious group of Life Members.

The election of two Directors to the Board has been completed and I'm pleased to announce that Jerry Timmons from Fairbanks, Alaska and

and Lon Dale of Missoula have been elected to three-year terms. I look forward to working with Jerry and Lon as both men have made significant contributions as Board Members of the Association during the past several years.

Laird A. Robinson
Laird A. Robinson
President

FRED ROHRBACH, MSO '65



Fred Rohrbach standing by the wreckage of a Sikorsky CH-53 helicopter—a "Jolly Green Giant"—somewhere in Southeast Asia, May 1998. During the Vietnam War Fred was there with the 173rd Airborne Brigade, a jump-qualified combat unit.

(Editor's note: I had a hard time getting a picture and story from Fred that pertained to one of his return trips to Vietnam, but finally convinced him.)

Fred helped in getting permission from the Foreign Ministry of Vietnam for the filming of the ABC TV Documentary, "We Were Soldiers Young and Brave," which was broadcast January, 1994. It was about the return of Vietnam veterans to the Ia Drang Valley, scene of very bloody fighting which took place near the Cambodian border. Today, it is a restricted military area. The unit that was involved during the fighting was the 1st Battalion, 7th Air Cavalry (General Custer's former unit), 1st Air Cavalry Division.

Fred was again back in Southeast Asia this year, this time with Lt. Gen. Harold C. Moore (Ret.). Gen. Moore had been a Lt. Col. during the fighting in the Ia Drang Valley, commanding the 1st Battalion of the 7th Air Cav. Gen. Moore wrote the book We Were Soldiers Once...And Young. Fred first met Gen. Moore in the early 1990's.

LISTING OF DECEASED JUMPERS & PILOTS

This listing of deceased Smokejumpers and Pilots is new and current through 7/19/98. Should dates and other material be incorrect, please let us know. Thanks.

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

ALLEN, MAXWELL "MAX"	MSO	48	Max died in an automobile accident that took place in the vicinity of Florence Junction, Arizona Monday morning, July 6th, 1998, 40 miles southeast of Phoenix. He and his wife Yvonne were on the way from their home at Tucson to visit a friend in Phoenix. The accident took place at the intersections of Highways 60 and 89. They were hit broadside by another vehicle. Max died instantly and Yvonne was seriously injured and flown by helicopter to Scottsdale Memorial Hospital east of Phoenix. She was able to return to the family home recently. Max's brother Norm, also a former smokejumper, lives at Thompson Falls, Montana and his brother Charles "Chuck" resides at Choteau in that state. Their dad, Ed, lives at St. Ignatius, Montana.
-----------------------------	------------	-----------	--

Max was age 72 and a native of Pine Ridge, South Dakota, which is located about 75 miles southeast of Rapid City and near the Nebraska line. He had been a Missoula smokejumper from 1948-1955 before transferring to McCall—1955-1965. He had made 250+ jumps. Max had worked for the U.S. Government in southeast Asia for about five years and in Peru for one, among other areas.

Max was well known for his sense of humor. Those of us who worked with him never forgot him. There was an instance on September 22, 1954 when President Eisenhower came to Missoula to dedicate the new Aerial Fire Depot. Around 4:00 p.m. that day two Johnson Flying Service aircraft were aloft with jumpers who were to give President Eisenhower demonstration jumps. Only three were able to jump because of increasing winds. Max was one of them. The Missoula Sentinel on Thursday, Sept. 23 reported: "...One of the three jumpers who did bail out, Max Allen, accidentally pulled the ripcord of his own auxiliary chute and came down with his orange and white main chute and the smaller white auxiliary both billowing out in front of him..." Those of us who knew Max can assure you that his emergency was not pulled accidentally. He wanted to get the President's attention, and that he did. President Eisenhower asked if Max was O.K. after he landed. Max greatly enriched the lives of many, many people and he was always one to help others at any time. We received calls about Max from a number of individuals, to include Jack Wall, Wally Dobbins, Greg Whipple, T.J. Thompson and Bob Webber, and we made a number of calls to those who had known him. Max has been cremated and memorial services are pending. Jack Wall in Tucson, Arizona is a contact person.

This picture, taken at Marana, Arizona in the mid-1960's, is a classic, and includes jumpers, past and present during those years, who were gathered for a fire management/tandango.

Some were employed by Intermountain Aviation out of Marana.

Front Row, left to right: Jim Waite, Dick "Pete" Peterson, and Del Catlin.

Second Row, kneeling, left to right: Wally Dobbins, Bill Wood, Len Krout, Glenn "Smitty" Smith, H. W. "Skip" Stratton,

*and **MAX ALLEN**. Back Row, left to right: Al Cramer, Herman Ball, Francis Lufkin, Hugh Fowler, Earl Cooley, Grover Tyler, Gar Thorsrud, and Jack Wall. Max's close friends are in the picture.*

Photo courtesy of Ken Hessel, a former McCall jumper, '58, who took the picture. Ken was an employee of Intermountain Aviation at the time.



(Continued on page 5)

LISTING OF DECEASED JUMPERS & PILOTS CONT.

(Continued from page 4)

This is a continuation of the listing of deceased Jumpers and Pilots through 7/19/98.

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

BORGESON, FRANK	FORMER JUMPER PILOT		Frank passed away from cancer at the age of 77 at Lewiston, Idaho on June 15, 1998. He is survived by his widow Barbara, daughter Dianna Sherman of Boise, and son Ted, residing at Lewiston. Frank and Barbara had resided at Lewiston for the past 18 years.
------------------------	----------------------------	--	--

He was a pilot in the U.S. Army Air Force during WW II. After the war Frank flew as a crop duster and then with Empire Aviation, that was based at Lewiston.

Frank started flying smokejumpers out of McCall in 1958, as a pilot for the Johnson Flying Service, piloting Ford Tri-motor's, Travel Air 6000's and Twin Beech's. In 1963, while flying out of Grangeville, Idaho, He was on the way to a fire when part of the prop on number 3 engine—the right one—broke loose and flew through the fuselage and into and out of the left wing. In the end, the engine tore loose from the Ford. The jumpers had exited the aircraft. Squad leader Ted Nyquest stayed with Frank, who was able to land the plane on a small strip at Dixie, Idaho in the Nez Perce N.F.

Frank stayed with the Johnson Flying Service until 1965 when he became a pilot for the U.S.F.S. and then chief pilot in 1966—out of Missoula. In 1976 he was appointed Chief Pilot at the Washington level and was based at Boise with the Boise Interagency Fire Center—now the National Interagency Fire Center. He flew with the smokejumpers for 21 years.



Frank Borgeson standing in front of one of Bob Johnson's TBM air tankers—a former torpedo bomber of WW II days that he was qualified in. The photo is from a booklet produced by the Johnson Flying Service in 1963.

KEY, CHUCK AND DONAHUE, J.D. RETARDANT PILOTS			During initial attack on a fire in the Gila N.F., five miles west of Reserve, New Mexico, on June 27th at 8:21 p.m., Air Tanker 08, a Lockheed P2V-7, N14835, operated by Neptune Aviation of Missoula and under contract to the U.S.F.S. at Albuquerque, was destroyed when it collided with trees, struck the ground and exploded while applying fire-retardant chemicals on its second pass. The flight had originated at Silver City, New Mexico. Chief pilot J.D.
--	--	--	--

Donahue was a commercial rated captain and copilot Chuck Key was an airline transport rated first officer. J.D. was from Grand Junction, Colorado and Chuck lived at Mesa, Arizona. They were referred to as a special team, and very professional. An investigation into the crash is continuing.



One of Neptune's P2V-5 air tankers sitting at the Missoula jumper base in 1998. This is Tanker 06. Tanker 08 was a newer version with two 3,500 h.p. engines. All of Neptune's air tankers have Westinghouse J34 turbojets under the wings.

Photo Credit—Jack Demmons

(Continued on page 6)

LISTING OF DECEASED JUMPERS AND PILOTS CONT.

(Continued from page 5)

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

FERGUSON, JOHN P. MYC 43			John passed away at Spokane, Washington April 18, 1998. He was interred at the Middleton, Idaho cemetery just north of Caldwell, Idaho on April 23d. John was born January 26, 1919 at Harrison, New Jersey, north of Newark. His full name was John Pershing Ferguson, and his nickname was "Fergie."
---------------------------------	--	--	--

He was one of the early-day smokejumpers and a veteran of WW II. He served with the U.S. Army Air Force as a crewman on B-29 heavy bombers in the Pacific Theatre of Operations. John worked for the U.S. Forest Service 40 years and retired as a Regional Cadastral Engineer. He was a registered professional surveyor in several western states and a lifetime member of BPOE Lodge, #310, Boise.

Prior to moving to Spokane to be near relatives, he had resided at North Ogden, Utah. John is survived by his wife Ruth of Spokane, and two daughters, Barbara Kay and husband Eddie Bowers of Boise, and Billie Rae and her husband James Pittman of Creston, Washington.



Left to Right: John Ferguson, MYC '43, Kenny Roth, MYC '46 and long-time Johnson Flying Service pilot, and Penn Stohr, a Vice-President with Evergreen Aviation out of McMinnville, Oregon and also a former Johnson Flying Service pilot. The picture was taken in 1990 at the Grangeville, Idaho jumper base. Penn had flown Evergreen's Tri-motor NC 9645 there for anniversary ceremonies.

Photo and obituary information courtesy of Bruce Egger, MYC '46.

During the past five years John gave the National Smokejumper Association much material and information relating to one of his first love's, the history of smokejumping. He and Lester Gahler made the first fire jumps in Region 4 August 14, 1943, on the Captain John Creek Fire in the Salmon River Drainage. In an earlier volume of The Static Line we mentioned the geographical feature the U.S. Forest Service named for John in 1944. It is Ferguson Basin, located 8 1/2 miles southwest of Council, Idaho, in an isolated area of the Payette N.F. John told us several years ago that the Ogden Standard Examiner had stated: "Persons had to be dead to have geographical features named after them." John was an exception.

John had a very serious heart attack in March 1994 and had never fully recovered from it.

KINNEY, BRUCE MSO '68	We received word July 18 that Bruce died Thursday, July 16, 1998 in rural Minidoka County of southern Idaho, northwest of Paul, location of his crop-dusting base of operations—about 30 miles east of Twin Falls. He had owned a spray operation for a number of years and had been crop-dusting. His aircraft collided with that of Mike Hoard of Burley, Idaho at 8:15 a.m. that day over potato fields. Both pilots died on impact from the collision.
------------------------------	--

Bruce was born and raised on a farm west of Missoula along Mullan Road. He attended Missoula County High School and was a member of the track and field team. He still holds the state high school record for the two-mile race. In recent years Bruce returned to running competition. Earlier this year he had finished among the top competitors.

He had been a Missoula smokejumper for several years and served with the U.S. Army in Vietnam.

Bruce is survived by his mother Lois of the Missoula area, a sister Carol and a brother Don. Services were held at Sunset Memorial Cemetery in Missoula Monday July, 20th.

He had been renovating several aircraft at the family ranch west of Missoula, to include a Noorduyn Norseman he purchased in Ontario, Canada. He had owned numerous crop-spraying aircraft.

Bruce was very helpful in supplying smokejumper and aviation history to the National Smokejumper Association.

FRANCIS LUFKIN MEMORIAL SERVICE

In the April, 1998 Vol. 2, Edition 5 of The Static Line we covered Francis' history, from his experiences as one of the pioneer jumpers in 1939 out of Winthrop, through his years as base manager there, and up to the date of his death on February 12, 1998.

Mike R. Bowman, NCSB '55, was quoted in the Moscow, Idaho paper concerning Francis. He said in part: "...On May 2 a celebration of his life was held at the Methow Valley Airport (smokejumper base). Over 300 attended and reminisced about the impact this man had on our lives.

"Mr. Lufkin had many personal accomplishments...He was recognized with awards from the highest levels of government for the management skills and style he practiced during his 33 years as manager of the North Cascades Smokejumper Base.

"But the most significant aspect of his life was Lufkin's challenge to hundreds of young men whom he mentored with his wisdom, ethics, and professional integrity. I know the impact he had on the young lives of the people who worked for

him, because, fortunately, I was one of those young men who came under the 'tough love' influence of this giant among men.

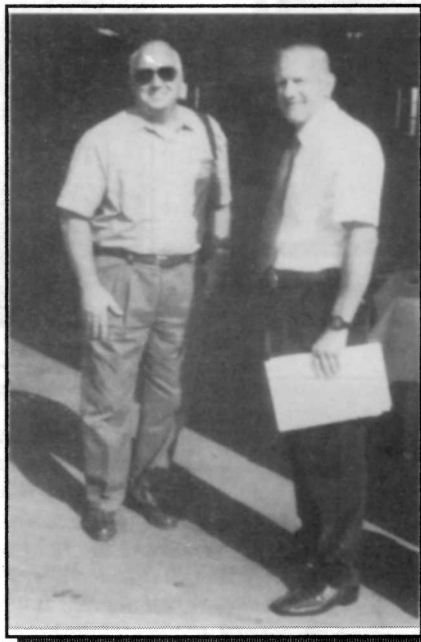
"...Francis Lufkin taught us all that 'One person can make a difference,' and for many of us he was that one person—a legacy to which all Americans should aspire."

Bill Moody, who took over from Francis when he retired, was the Winthrop base manager from 1972-1989. He was in charge of the opening ceremonies at the memorial services and Francis' son Larry, CJ (Cave Junction, Oregon) '63, represented the family. Larry gave a talk and then introduced members of the audience and guest speakers.

Jack Demmons, editor of The Static Line, was at the NCSB (Winthrop) base on Saturday, May 2 to attend the memorial services. He said it was a very moving experience. He counted approximately 350 at the ceremonies. "It was something of a mini-reunion," he said. Wally Tower, Terri Tower and Jack took a number of pictures and some from each are included with this article.



Larry Lufkin, son of Francis Lufkin. He first started jumping out of Cave Junction, Oregon in 1963.



Left to Right: Randy Tower, son of "Snix" and former NCSB (Winthrop) jumper pilot, Wally Tower. Randy first jumped out of Winthrop in 1964; Bill Moody, Winthrop Base Manager 1972-1989. Bill was a rookie at Winthrop in 1957.



Left to Right: "Trooper Tom" Edmonds, who rookied at Cave Junction in 1966; Chuck Sheley, who was a rookie at Cave Junction in 1959.

(Continued on page 8)

FRANCIS LUFKIN MEMORIAL SERVICE CONT.

(Continued from page 7)



Left to Right: Dorothy Weinmann; Emily Allen; Lola Lufkin; Lola's sister Ellen Jones, Shirley Glen.



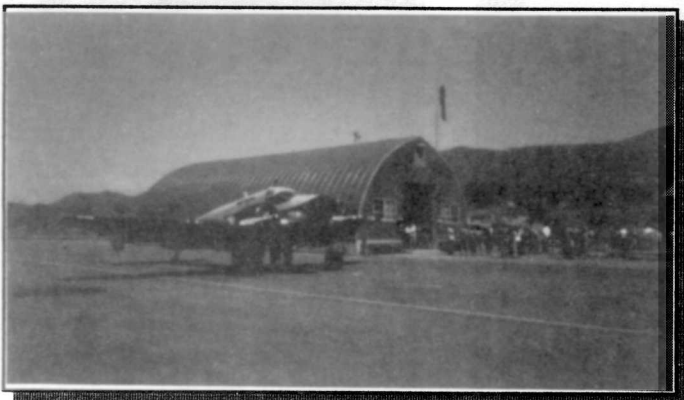
Jim Allen, NCSB '46 and long-time Base Manager at (RAC) Redmond, Oregon; Terri Tower, daughter of Wally and "Snix" Tower; Dave "Skinny" Beals, (MYC) McCall, Idaho, '45.



Left to Right, Facing camera: Terri Tower, daughter of Wally and "Snix" Tower; Craig Boesel, NCSB '66; and Keith V. Fitzjarrold NCSB '63.



Jim Allen, NCSB '46; Bill Wood, (MSO) Missoula, '43; Hal Weinmann, RAC '46; and Ben Hull, NCSB '45.



A Methow Valley Air Service Twin Beech, of the type once used by Winthrop jumpers for a number of years, sitting in front of the Winthrop bases's loft on May 2, 1998 at the

Methow Valley State Airport. The airfield was once known as the Intercity Airport, since it was located between Twisp and Winthrop, Washington.

Prior to 1930 the airstrip belonged to Okanogan County. In 1931 the field was donated to the American Legion, who sold it to the Forest Service for \$1.00 an acre in 1932. The Forest Service later wanted out of the airport business and in the mid-1980's deeded Intercity Airport to the Washington State Division of Aeronautics. Washington State then renamed it Methow Valley State Airport.

A movement is now underway to try and get the field named for Francis Lufkin.

This was the site of the experimental parachute project in 1939, which led to the establishment of the smokejumper programs in various parts of the nation.

The above information came from Bill Moody.

(Continued on page 9)

FRANCIS LUFKIN MEMORIAL SERVICE CONT.

(Continued from page 8)



John Button, NCSB Assistant Base Manager. John rookied at NCSB in '75. He is standing in the messhall, which is still used from time to time.



Ken Cavin, former NCSB jumper and smokejumper pilot.



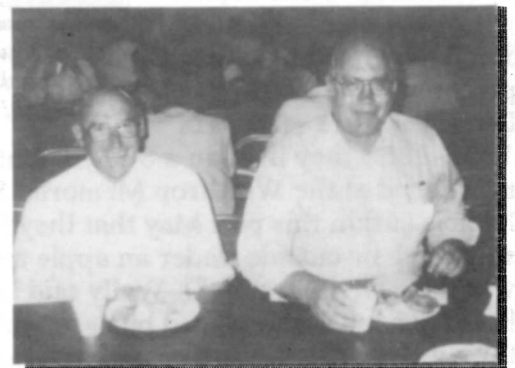
Doug Houston, NCSB Base Manager, who rookied at RAC (Redmond Air Center, Redmond, Oregon), '73. Deanne Shulman, first female smokejumper. Deanne rookied out of MYC (McCall, Idaho), '81.



Left to Right: Bill Crookham, NCSB '52; Rod Snider, NCSB '51. Rod became a pilot for the Johnson Flying Service, flying both helicopters and fixed-wing aircraft, after serving as a smokejumper. He was involved in a number of rescue missions through the years.



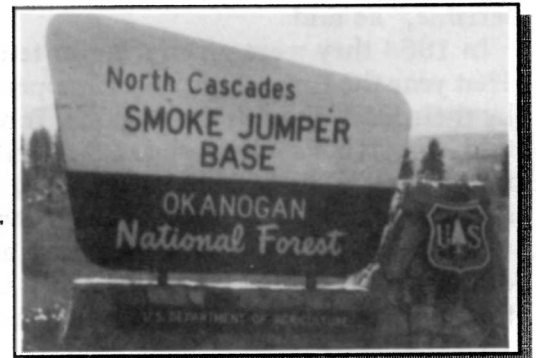
Left to Right: Hugh Fowler, MSO '47; Bill Wood, MSO '43; Bill's wife Ruby. They are standing at one of the entrance's to the warehouse. (MSO refers to the Missoula base.)



Left to Right: Delos (Dee) Dutton, long-time smokejumper, who rookied at MSO in '51; Tommy Albert, CJ (Cave Junction, Oregon) '64 and former jumper pilot, plus duty as a Regional Air Officer.

**NCSB stands
for
North
Cascades
Smokejumper
Base.**

Sign at the entrance to the NCSB Smokejumper Base.



WALLY TOWER, SMOKEJUMPER PILOT

During WW II Wally helped test new 4-engine B-17 bombers at Long Beach, California and accumulated more than 260 hours of flight time in them.

Wally served as a smokejumper pilot at the Winthrop, Washington base part-time during 1952, flying the Forest Service's Noorduyn Norseman, and also flew the plane out of Cave Junction and other bases as needed that year. In 1953 he flew full-time out of Winthrop and did so through 1959 during the fire seasons.

He became the Forest Service's Region 6 (Washington and Oregon) Air Officer at the close of the 1959 season and remained in that position through 1977, when he retired. In 1979 he and his wife, Paulene ("Snix") moved to Salem, Oregon where they live today.

Wally mentioned the days at Winthrop when he, his wife, daughter Terri and Son Randy lived in rather primitive conditions.

During the fire seasons of 1952-1953 they lived in a 9' by 9' tent. (Terri mentioned at the Winthrop Memorial Service for Francis Lufkin this past May that they had an old stuffed chair outside under an apple tree, and that was their "living room.") Wally said he dug a hole for a toilet and placed burlap "walls" around three sides. There was a small irrigation ditch nearby where they washed their clothes and the youngsters went swimming in a large flume. Water for drinking and cooking was hauled about five miles from the Winthrop base in five-gallon milk cans. They cooked on a Coleman stove out in front of the tent. "The yellow jackets were terrible," he said.

In 1954 they were given a larger tent—9' x 12'. That year the Forest Supervisor happened to drop by their location with the Regional Forester, who told him, "That's where your GS-11 pilot and family live." The Supervisor was very concerned and the next season a surplus U.S. Navy trailer was brought in to the Winthrop base and placed on the far side of the runway. Wally said the trailer was actually worse than the tents, because

of the heat absorbed by it. There wasn't any shade. Terri and Randy enjoyed their experiences during those years.

During the past year Wally became very ill from a severe infection and the doctor said if he had arrived at the hospital twenty minutes later he would not have survived. He was in the hospital at Salem for a considerable period of time. However, he is doing very well now—and still healing. Wally gets out, drives and does some shopping and visiting.



Wally Tower sitting in the rear cockpit of an Alexander Eaglerock biplane in April, 1938. The aircraft had a Wright J65 engine. Photo courtesy of Wally Tower.

Their daughter Terri lives nearby to the south in the Corvallis area. Son Randy is a former Winthrop smokejumper who first started jumping in 1964. He and his family reside at Pleasanton, California in the San Francisco-Oakland area. (There are pictures of Terri and Randy in the photo section of this issue of The Static Line relating to Francis Lufkin's Memorial Service.)

Winthrop jumpers have many stories to tell about Wally when he was flying from there, and he has stories about them. Several years ago we mentioned one situation—related to us by Tony Percival, NCSB, '54, now living at Tucson. Tony and others had been on a fire and were being flown back to Winthrop by Wally in the Noorduyn. The jumpers kept easing back towards the rear of the cabin and the center of gravity was affected. Wally had to trim and retrim the plane for level flight. Suddenly, all of the jumpers quickly moved to the rear and the nose of the plane came up abruptly. Of course, Wally then knew what was happening. They kept flying along and Wally decided to teach them a lesson. Suddenly the engine quit and they started going down. Tony said the only sound was the clicking of emergency chutes being quickly hooked to jumper harnesses. Wally had intentionally shut the engine off. He said he really howled when he looked back and saw their white faces. **WALLY TOWER, A NUMBER 1 PILOT!**

IDAHO CITY SMOKEJUMPER BASE CONT.

This is Part 3 of a series of articles concerning the former Idaho City Smokejumper Base that was once located 25 miles northeast of Boise, Idaho in Region 4. There will be a conclusion of Smokey Stover's material in the next newsletter. More Idaho City stories by others will be forthcoming later. As in the past, most of the material and pictures are from "Smokey" Stover, McCall '46, who was Base Manager. (IDCT stands for Idaho City.)



The Original Idaho City Smokejumper Unit One. Seated, Left to Right: "Smokey" Stover; "Ty" Teichert-deceased; and Kenn Smith-deceased.

Standing, Left to Right: John "David Ben" Stern; Jim "Dyke" Nally; Nick Kennedy; Gene "Law & Order" Hobbs; Bobby "Tabasco" Montoya; Mike "Mighty Mite" Burney; and Jim "Viking" Lindell.

Not shown in the photo are the football helmets and shoes donated by Knute Rockne and the staff at Notre Dame for the protection of these well-known "Dare Devils of the Skies" when they jumped into the 'FLAMING HELL' of the forests.

During the 1967 season Idaho City had a Twin Beech (E-18) and a Turbo-Porter (Fairchild Hiller) for jump ships. Julio Bilbao, IDCTY '64, suffered the only accident that summer when he fell out of a tree after a parachute jump, landing on his head.

The standard fire pack arrangement was changed, and it now held equipment in one pack for two jumpers. Temperatures set new all-time highs in August and there was low humidity, but there wasn't much lightning. The twenty jumpers averaged 6.0 fire jumps per person.

The base expanded to 29 jumpers in 1968, which included 12 NEDS (new men). There was little jump activity after August 13 because of heavy rains. John Cramer was promoted to squad leader.

In 1969 Idaho City again had 29 jumpers and 10 of them were new. In addition to a Twin Otter and the Turbo-Porter, the base had a twin-engine DC-3.

The number of fire jumps made that year were: 111 in Region 4; six in Region 3—New Mexico; 19 in Region 5—California; and five in Region 6—in Oregon.



Kenn Smith with the Idaho City rabbit known as "BoReg 2nd." Kenn had 17 years of jump experience. The picture was taken in 1962.

On the Boise N.F. in Region 4 there was a near tragedy when Kenn Smith, Steve Carlson and Bryant Cox were involved in a helicopter crash while being retrieved from a fire southwest of Trinity Lookout on Smith Creek. The helicopter crashed north of Mountain Home, Idaho and east of Boise. Nine Idaho City smokejumpers parachuted to the scene to aid the injured. A second helicopter flew the injured to Smith Prairie and a plane then flew them to Boise. Kenn received serious injuries, to include broken ribs. He and Carlson were hospitalized at St. Aphonsus Hospital in Boise. Cox and the pilot, Rod Kvamme, were treated and released. Kenn recovered, and returned to work at the Idaho City base, but did not jump again. He passed away August 22, 1997.

Idaho City had 26 jumpers in 1970 and 6 were new jumpers. This was a very special year. The Idaho City base was moved to Boise and the year proved to be the most active fire season since 1949 for these jumpers. In addition to their own Region 4, they also made a number of jumps in New Mexico, Oregon, Washington and Alaska.

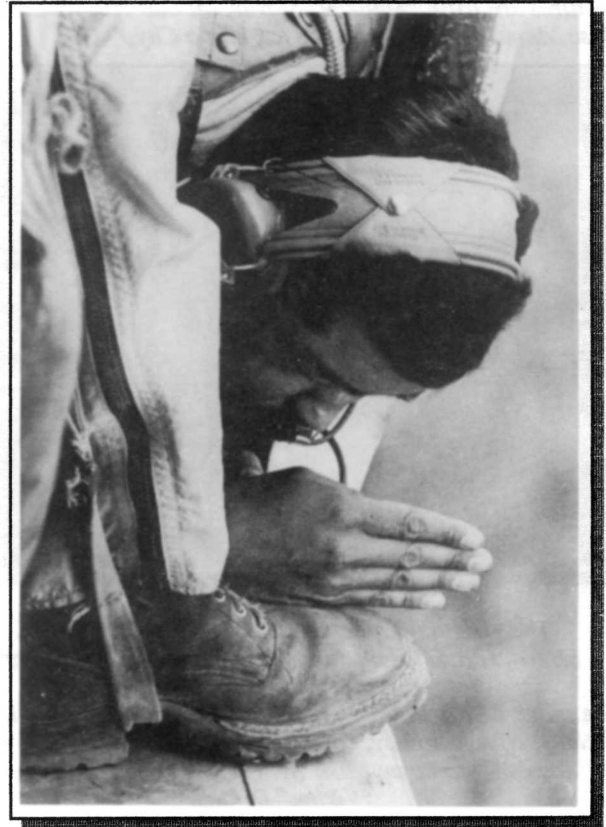
(Continued on page 12)

IDAHO CITY SMOKEJUMPER BASE CONT.

(Continued from page 11)



Concerned Foreman. Smokey Stover standing behind Bob Montoya in a Douglas C-47 in 1970, flying out of the Forest Service base at Boise. Bob was the spotter. Note Smokey's right hand on the jumper's static line. The jumper is unidentified.



Bob Montoya, IDCTY '62, lining up the Douglas C-47 over a jump spot in 1970, after flying out of the Forest Service base at Boise.



Right on Target. An Idaho City jumper coming in right on the spot at the Idaho City training area. The jumper who had just landed almost hit the spot dead center also. The date is August 17, 1969.

There will be a conclusion of Smokey Stover's material on Idaho City in the next newsletter. However, as mentioned at the beginning of this article, there will be more stories later by other Idaho City jumpers.

SILK STORIES: Fractured Fables From the Fireline

by Charlie Palmer, MSO '95, an Active Missoula Jumper. "Silk Stories" was originally started by Scott Belknap, MYC '83, also an Active Missoula Jumper.

WOMEN SMOKEJUMPERS

They stand out, not due to their strength in numbers, but rather, just the opposite, because of their rarity within the smokejumper group as a whole. In a profession that generates much public interest, their presence seems to intrigue the casual observer even more. Visiting film crews and writers, ubiquitous observers at most refresher trainings, descend upon them like magpies on fresh roadkill. Tourists at the base simply stare and trade whispers with their traveling companions. Few in number, women smokejumpers have always commanded this sort of attention.



Margarita "Marge" Philips, MSO (Missoula Base), '88, has just landed during a refresher jump in the Nine Mile country 30 miles west of Missoula, in April, 1995. Marge has been jumping for the past 11 seasons. She is highly thought of by her peers and your Static Line Editor. She is a very physically tough, polite, intelligent and compassionate person.



Thomas "T.J." Thompson, MSO '55, standing with Margarita "Marge" Philips by the Missoula Smokejumper Base on April 4, 1994.

T.J. was on a visit from his home at Boerne, Texas, just north of "Old San Antone." He has not really retired yet and holds the title of Honorary Texas Ranger, among other titles. (When Texas is mentioned in T.J.'s presence, be sure to click your heels and salute.)

must be clearly added to the list. While the first three can be considered pioneers for their early work with the parachute, and Johnson considered as a pioneer in smokejumper aviation, so too can Shulman be regarded as an "early" pioneer for groundbreaking efforts.

In 1981, training at McCall, Idaho, Deanne Shulman became the first female smokejumper, ending what for forty-two years had been an exclusively all male fraternity. The next year, 1982, Kim Maynard, Wendy Kam and Marti Billingsley successfully completed Missoula's rookie smokejumper training, thus becoming Region 1's first female jumpers.

The road to earning a set of smokejumper wings has never been an easy one. For these first women, when not lugging around Smitty bags that held roughly their own weight inside, they were contending with the mixed feelings held by some regarding their entry into the smokejumper community. But, in true smokejumper fashion, they persevered, and in so doing, helped clear the fireline for future women jumpers.

Today, roughly 5 per cent, or about 20, of the 400+ smokejumpers located throughout the West and Northwest are women. Missoula's current share is five. The veteran amongst them is Margarita Philips, a squad leader in her 11th season. Sarah Doehring, an eighth year jumper, gained her experience in the Sula District of the Bitterroot Valley south of Missoula and with the Bitterroot hotshots before coming to the jumpers. Shelly Dunlap, in her fourth year, completed rookie training at the age of 45. (Four years ago, your Editor watched Shelly carry 110 pounds three miles in less than 90 minutes, the maximum time allowed for that test.)

Jeanine Faulkner and Cindy Wallace are both rookies this year at the smokejumper base located west of Missoula—referred to locally as the Aerial Fire Depot.

When asked what it feels like to be one of the few women amongst a large group of men, both Philips and Doehring confided that they do not really pay the discrepancy much attention. Perhaps there is a lesson in that for the rest of us.

In the storied history of smokejumping, with names like Rufus Robinson, Earl Cooley, Frank Derry and Bob Johnson, another name, Shulman,

BOB HOOPER, CJ '67-CAVE JUNCTION OREGON AND ALASKA SMOKEJUMPER OPERATIONS.

In the April and August 1995 volumes of The Static Line we had articles about the Siskiyou Smokejumper Base at Cave Junction, Oregon. We have more material now from Bob Hooper, CJ '67, currently living at Tucson, Arizona. He started at Cave Junction and jumped from there for nine seasons, and was then a jumper with the Bureau of Land Management out of Anchorage and Fairbanks, Alaska for two seasons. Bob sent us a large number of pictures and we have been reproducing them.

This will be the first in a series of articles about the Siskiyou, and later, the Alaska bases. We would greatly appreciate material and pictures from other jumpers and pilots relating to the Siskiyou and Alaska smokejumper operations. Pictures are reproduced and then returned to the owners. Thanks. Does anyone have any information about former Alaska jumpers Gary Sharp and Dave Ames and a plane crash around McGrath in 1968 or 1969? Also, a C-47 (DC-3) crash—non-smokejumper related—with fire fighters near McGrath, possibly in the late 1960's. There were fatalities. Tom Boatner, FBX (Fairbanks, Alaska), '80 and once base manager there, has given us some information. Tom has been a big supporter of the NSA. (The code we use for those who rookied out of Cave Junction at the Siskiyou Base is "CJ".)

Bob has had 14 years experience as a physician assistant with the United States Army Reserve and Federal Bureau of Prisons; 12 years experience as a high school teacher and coach; and six years teaching night classes at the junior college level.

He currently is with a Federal Corrections Institution at Tucson and has been a member of a Special Operations Reaction Team for five years. In 1997 he spent six months supporting an active civic action team in Micronesia.

Bob obtained a B.A. degree in physical education from California State University, Chico, Chico, California in 1967 and completed the AMEDDD Officer Advanced Course at Fort Houston, Texas in 1991. He is a member of the Society of Army Physician Assistants; the Arizona



Left to Right, Astronaut Stuart Roosa, CJ '53, and Bob after Stuart gave a talk to Bob's students at Marysville High School in the early 1970's. Bob was a teacher and coach at Marysville at the time. Stuart died later while living at Gulfport, Mississippi.



Bob Hooper, CJ 67, suited up and preparing to board a Twin Beech jump ship at the Siskiyou jumper base at Cave Junction in July, 1974.

State Association of Physician Assistants; the Veterans Caucus of the American Academy of Physician Assistants; the Arizona Association-U.S.A. Track and Field Officials; and the National Smokejumper Association.

The history of the Siskiyou base at Cave Junction dates back to 1943. At that time Region 6 (covers Washington and Oregon) sent a squad of 11 men to Seeley Lake, Montana, 45 miles northeast of Missoula, to be trained. They were then to operate out of Cave Junction. These jumpers were members of the Civilian Public Service

(Continued on page 15)

BOB HOOPER, CJ '67-CAVE JUNCTION, OREGON AND ALASKA SMOKEJUMPER OPERATIONS CONTINUED.

(Continued from page 14)

(CPS) program. This group of 11 was under the direction of Jack Heintzleman, who today lives in Seattle. Back at the Cave Junction base they jumped on six fires during the season. The crew was available for jumps on fires not only in Region 6, but also on the Klamath, Trinity and Shasta National Forests in Region 5 of California.

They used both the 30-foot Eagle and 28-foot Irvin chutes in 1943. Chest packs were the 27-foot Eagle and 24-foot Irvin. They jumped from Ford Tri-motor's; Travel Air 6000's, and a seven-place Fairchild. (The Fairchild was on standby duty in Dallasport, Washington and it took three hours for the plane to fly to Cave Junction.)

During the 1943 season a loft at the Redwood Ranger Station at Cave Junction was built.



The smokejumper office at the Cave Junction Siskiyou base in June, 1974. Photo courtesy of Bob Hooper.



August 1967. One C-47 (DC-3) is taking off with 16 Siskiyou jumpers for a fire near the Umpqua N.F. in southwestern Oregon. Another C-47 and a Twin Beech C-45 are on standby. The picture was taken from in front of the office. Photo credit-Bob Hooper.



"Trooper Tom" Edmonds, CJ '66, preparing materials for one of the cabins he was building in the vicinity of Cave Junction. We will have pictures of those cabins in another newsletter.

Photo courtesy of Bob Hooper.

The Siskiyou N.F. is located in the extreme southwestern part of Oregon and Cave Junction is on Highway 199, 12 miles north of the California border. There are few settlements to the west between Cave Junction and the Oregon coast. The former base no longer exists.

“TANKER 10 IS DOWN, JUMPERS GOING IN”

During the summer of 1979 there had been a long stretch of hot, dry weather. In the latter part of July firefighters had fought 654 forest and grassland fires in Region 1, which included Montana.

Between 5:00 and 6:00 p.m. on Saturday, July 21, a 4-engine aerial tanker was enroute to a fire about nine miles southwest of Superior, Montana.

Lightning had started a fire in the vicinity of Cayuse Saddle, near Two Creek and Rabbit Creek. At the controls of the former Army Air Force B-17G were chief pilot Jerome G. LeRoux of Corvallis, Montana and copilot Robert B. Masters of Prescott, Arizona. The aircraft was owned by Black Hills Aviation of Alamogordo, New Mexico. Arnold Kolb of that city was the owner of the operation, and at one time had his company based out of Rapid City, South Dakota in the Black Hills country.

This B-17G once had the military serial number 42-102715, and the designation B-17G-55-BO. It had been produced during WW II by the Vega Corporation, which at the time was a subsidiary of the Lockheed Corporation of California.

B-17G-55-BO had serial number N66573 as a civilian designation. At one time it had the nickname “Batmobile” because of a very unusual paint scheme. During its lifetime it had carried U.S.F.S. tanker codes A10, B10, E85, 32 and 10.

On this hot day in July the number 10 was painted in white on a red tail. The tanker had been on a standby basis at West Yellowstone and flew to Missoula for a load of retardant prior to departing for the fire.

As N66573 neared the target area to release its load of retardant, another aircraft was flying nearby. It had 11 smokejumpers on-board. The fire was in an extremely rugged region with steep slopes. The spotter for the jumpers had been unable to locate a suitable jump spot, and there were “squirrely” winds in the area.

Vern Schwartz, a radio fire dispatcher for the Lolo N.F., had called for jumpers, and then the aerial tanker, as well as a six-man ground crew, plus a helicopter to guide the ground crew to the fire.



Jack Demmons, NSA Static Line editor, standing by one of the main wheels. Picture was taken on 10/12/93.

The helicopter pilot landed in the area and noted that the tanker seemed to flying in the wrong location and so informed the pilot.

Suddenly he saw a burst of black smoke. Tanker 10 had crashed high up on the side of a very steep mountain slope.

Within minutes, the smokejumpers went in, disregarding the terrain and winds, parachuting

above and near the crash site.

Both pilots had been thrown clear of the plane and died on impact. The jumpers helped retrieve the bodies and put out the fire started by the crash.

The remains of the B-17 became the property of Neptune Aviation, under the ownership of Mark Timmons, when Black Hills Aviation sold out. (Neptune now uses former U.S. Navy Lockheed P2V's for retardant work.)

In late October of 1993

Demmons met



Pat Cortis is standing next to the remains of number 4 engine. Pat at the time was the Administrative Officer for the Superior Ranger District. He then became the Administrative Officer for the Rocky Mountain Research Labs in Missoula.

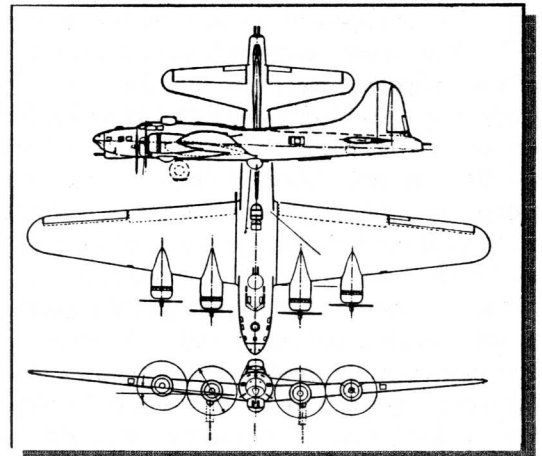
(Continued on page 17)

“TANKER 10 CONTINUED”

(Continued from page 16)

with Timmons concerning Tanker 10. Mark gave the wreckage of N66573 to the Museum of Mountain Flying. So far, one propeller and an assortment of other items have been brought out from the crash site and are on display at the NSA/MMF headquarters in Hanger 24 at the Missoula County airport.

The story about Tanker 10 involved one more chapter in smokejumper rescue operations.



Three-view drawing of a B-17G heavy bomber in wartime configuration. Tanker 10 once looked like this when it was in military service.

Pat Corts standing by the tail section of Tanker 10. The ground slope averages 65 degrees.

Photo credit Jack Demmons. The photo was taken October 12, 1993.



The wreckage of Tanker 10 along the steep mountain slope. The arrow points in the direction of flight prior to impact. The tops of lodgepole pines were torn off along that path. Pieces of Tanker 10 can be seen behind and ahead of the main wreckage—light spots in the trees. At this time, shortly after the crash, the fin and rudder were in an upright position. Years later a lodgepole fell on the tail section, knocking it over.

The smokejumpers parachuted to an area above the wreckage.

Photo courtesy of Pat Wilson, once Base Manager for the Grangeville Smokejumpers and now with the Missoula Technology & Development Center.

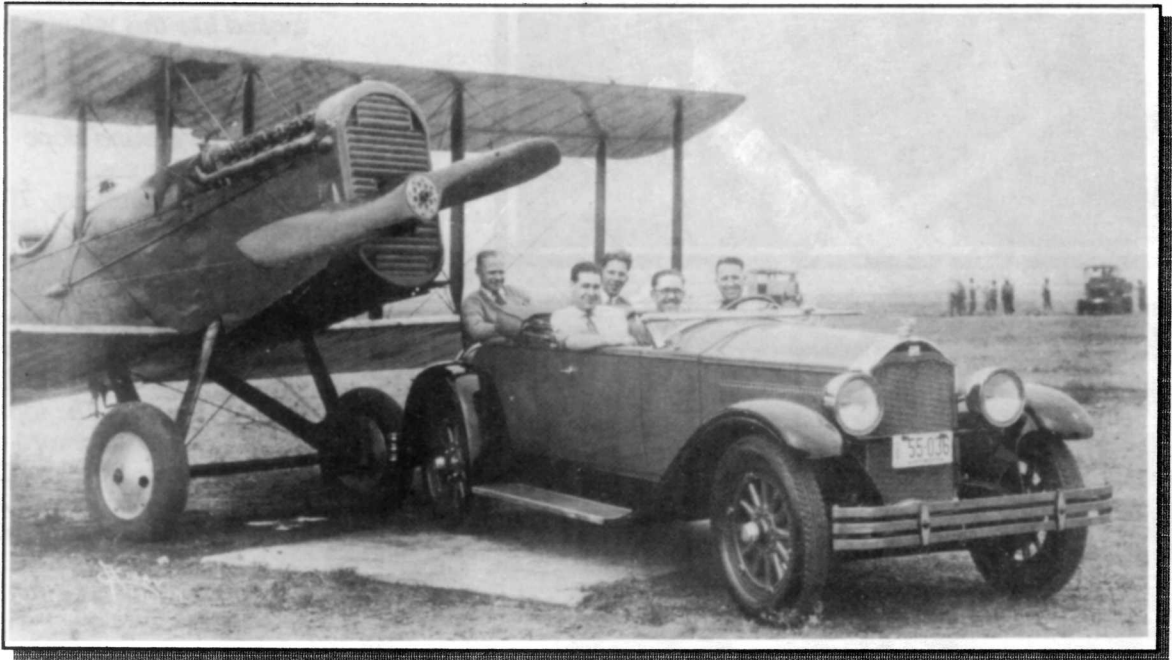
NICK MAMER, EARLY AERIAL FIRE PATROL PILOT

The Spokane Chronicle on June 25, 1925 had this comment: "Lieutenant Nick B. Mamer of Spokane today received appointment as forest fire patrol pilot for eastern Washington, northern Idaho and western Montana. He will leave Spokane tomorrow night for Rockwell Field, San Diego, to get his Liberty-powered deHaviland Airplane, which will be used on the patrol..." The Army Air Corps had loaned two DH-4 aircraft to the U.S. Forest Service for use with fire patrols out of Spokane. The fact that Mamer was known as one of the most capable and experienced pilots in the western part of the United States won him that opportunity.

Many jumpers and pilots through the years have been involved in aerial fire patrol work. The beginnings of such operations actually preceeded Nick Mamer's time. The Missoula Sentinel, May 17, 1919 stated: "Officials of District No. 1 of the Forest Service received word of the establishment of the first air patrol of national forests, to begin June 1, making the sky pilot who will give early warning of fires a reality at last.

would become his home base.

Mamer taught Bob Johnson of the Johnson Flying Service at Missoula how to fly, and later, how to fly Ford Tri-motors. He established the Mamer Flying Service and Mamer Air Transport firm at Spokane and pioneered a route between Spokane and Minneapolis—the "Northern Tier Route." He purchased two Tri-motors in 1929. One was NC 9612, Model 4-AT-55, which Bob Johnson owned from 10/28/57 to 2/21/69, and NC 8403, Model 4-AT-65. NC 8403 was later damaged during a landing at Flat, Alaska on 10/26/34 after Mamer sold it that year. Its fuselage is presently at the Aviation Heritage Museum in Anchorage. Mamer flew the Tri-motors in and out of Missoula and into remote Forest Service airstrips in such places as the South Fork Wilderness Area in Montana and Chamberlin Basin in Idaho, hauling freight. There is a picture of NC 8403—known as Westwind II—in the book The Spokane Aviation story, being loaded with "Gilt Top



One of the deHaviland DH-4 aerial fire patrol planes at Felts Field, 1927. Nick Mamer is not with the group in the new 1927 Buick Roadster. Photo from The Spokane Aviation Story by Jim McGoldrick.

"The initial patrol will be established over the Angeles Forest, in District 5, which is located conveniently near the Army Balloon School at Arcadia, California."

Nick Mamer was a legendary pilot, one of the foremost in the Northwest at the time. He was born at Hastings, Minnesota, about fifteen miles southeast of Minneapolis. He ran away from school at the age of 16 and had joined the Army. While of high school age, he raced motorcycles and made free falls. At age 18 he became a U.S. Army Air Corps pilot and was stationed in the Canal Zone during WW I. He migrated to Spokane in 1920 and that area

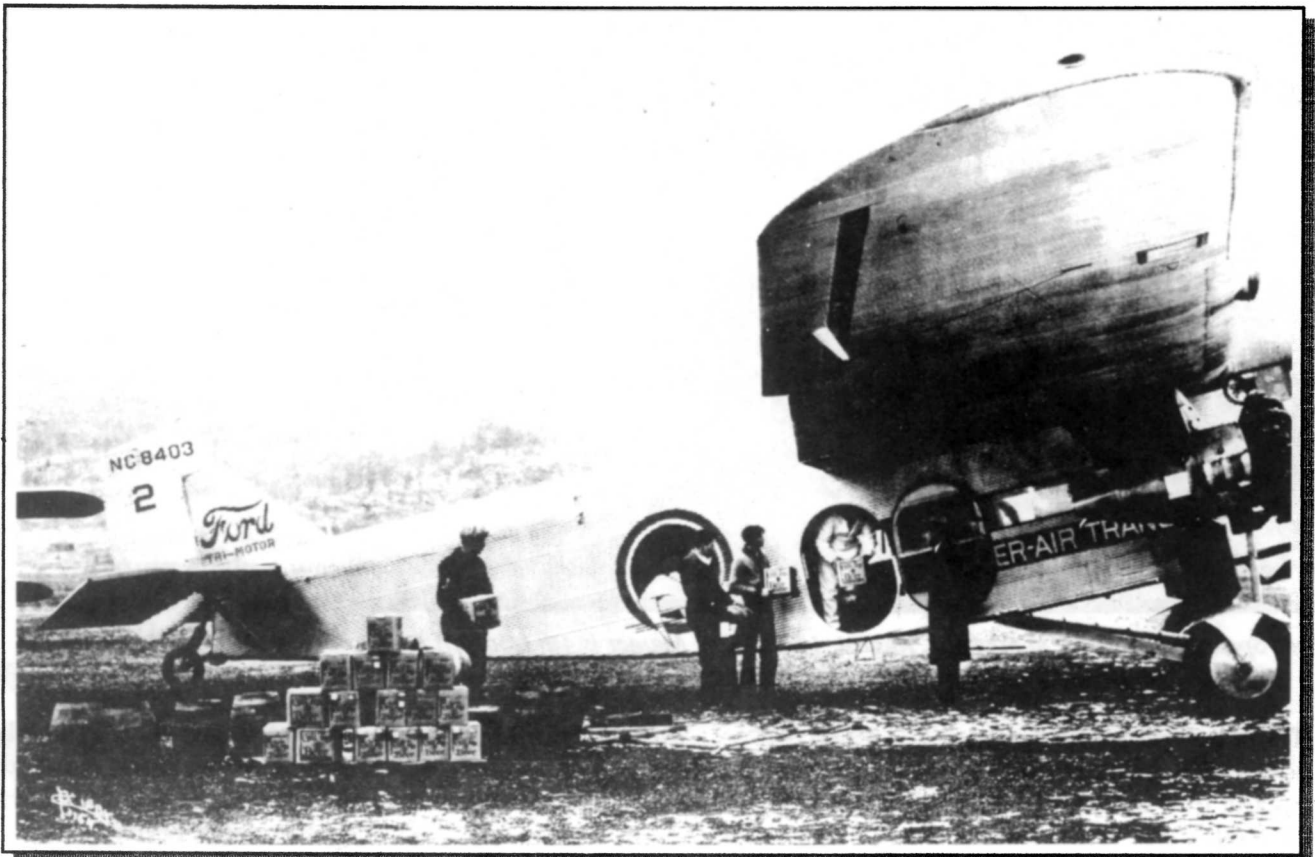
Beer" at Spokane in December 1933, to be flown to miners in Wallace, Idaho, since all roads to that area had been washed out by severe flooding.

During Sept. 23-24, 1927 Mamer took part in a national air race from New York to Spokane, a distance of 2,275 miles. He, with Bruce McDonald as observer, was third in Class A. Bob Johnson was 10th. At the same time there was a race from San Francisco to Spokane which was 925 miles in length. Both were sponsored by the city of Spokane.

(Continued on page 19)

NICK MAMER, CONTINUED

(Continued from page 18)



Nick Mamer's Tri-motor NC 8403 being loaded with "Gilt Top Beer" for a flight from Spokane to Wallace, Idaho in December, 1933, since roads between the two cities had been washed out by severe flooding. Wallace was a very important mining town at the time and the miners were out of beer, and thirsty!



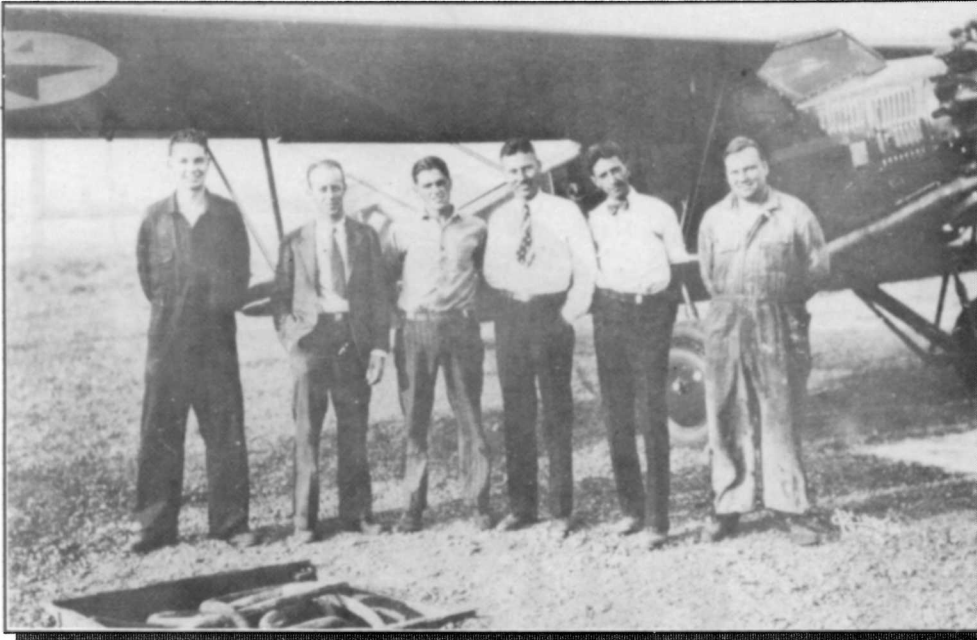
Nick Mamer standing by one of his aircraft prior to the National Air Race between New York and Spokane during September 23-24, 1927. The course was 2,275 miles in length.

Mamer, with Bruce McDonald along as observer, came in third in the Class A event and Bob Johnson of Missoula was tenth.

The race was sponsored by Spokane.

NICK MAMER, CONTINUED

(Continued from page 19)



The "Spokane Sun-God" at Spokane, August, 1929. Nick Mamer is 4th from left and Art Walker 3d. Photo credit *The Spokane Aviation Story*.

Then, commencing on Aug. 15, 1929, he undertook a transcontinental non-stop flight from Spokane in a Buhl plane named the "Spokane Sun-God." Art Walker went along as mechanic and refueling hoseman. They flew from Spokane to San Francisco, and then on to New York and back to Spokane, returning there on Aug. 20th. Mamer and Walker had been aloft five days without sleep and had established a number of records, one of which was a world's record non-stop flight of 7,200 miles.

One refueling had taken place over the Missoula area on Aug. 20th. The *Daily Missoulian* that date reported: "...Mamer swung over the airport and dropped a square of pasteboard. On it was the following message: 'Hello Missoula. We are sure glad to be this close to home—this is God's country again...Hello to Harry Bell, Bob Johnson—I mean everybody...'"

Mamer then continued on with his fire patrol duties, and flights included stops at remote airstrips in Idaho, Washington and Montana.

Later, Mamer sold his air transport firm and became a chief pilot for Northwest Airlines, flying the Seattle-Minneapolis route.

On Jan. 10, 1938 he was flying a new Lockheed Model 14-H Super Electra, named "Zephyr's" by Northwest Airlines. There were eight passengers. (Northwest did not have stewardesses on those planes.) It was Flight 2, and flying over the Bridger Range, about 15 miles northeast of Bozeman, Montana. Mamer radioed the Billings airport at 3:05 p.m.: "Flight 2 OK. Cruising at 9,000, airspeed 253 mph."

At 3:07 p.m. woodcutters saw a plane plunging to the ground, hitting close to them and the Flaming Arrow Ranch. They noticed part of the tail assembly

was missing as it fell. All on-board died instantly.

During his final moments, Mamer had radioed that the rudders were "whipping about like sails in a wind." An investigation later revealed that the tail structure had failed from what is known as "natural resonance, or period of vibration."

A memorial to Nick Mamer was erected at Felts Field in Spokane. It is a large four-sided concrete structure with clocks on each side. It is still there.

A dedication was held on May 30, 1939 and thousands attended. Washington Governor Clarence D. Martin said: "Nick Mamer made the supreme sacrifice to the cause of aviation...No finer design could have been chosen, because its artistic simplicity typifies correctly the life of our beloved friend."



A Lockheed Electra of the type Mamer was flying 1/10/38.