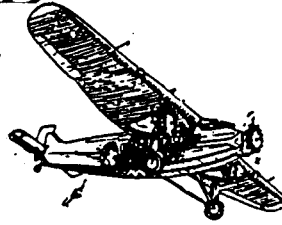


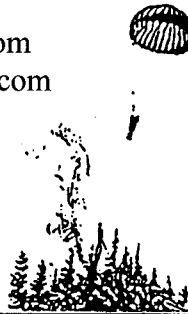
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OCTOBER 1998

EDITION 5



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PHIL DAVIS, JACK DEMMONS, ROGER SAVAGE

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

We have streamlined our operations. Chuck Sheley, Cave Junction '59, currently residing at Chico, California to the southeast of Redding in the northern part of that state, is now in charge of merchandise orders as reflected in the color brochure insert he has prepared. (That merchandise is also shown on our Web Page—see cover for the address.) You will note new items. Former items are still on sale also. Orders are to be placed with him in California at the address shown in the insert. We certainly thank Chuck for all of the effort he has expended on behalf of our Association.

Chuck Pickard, Missoula '48, is handling sales for the new patches he designed—see insert. His winter address in Florida is shown there also. He has now raised more than \$1,600.00 for our Museum Fund through sale of his decals. Many thanks are also due Chuck (Pickard).

We have effected one more change to help with the office load at our Headquarters in Hanger 24 at the Missoula County Airport. Monroe "Spud" DeJarnette, Missoula '49, will now be in charge of new and renewal memberships and will also help search out new members. Spud lives at Auburn, California to the northeast of Sacramento. *NOTE: APPLICATIONS AND CHECKS ARE TO BE SENT TO OUR MISSOULA OFFICE AS IN THE PAST. CHECKS WILL BE PROCESSED AT THAT LOCATION AND PAPERWORK FORWARDED TO SPUD FOR PROCESSING.*

We also want to thank Spud for his very generous volunteer efforts.

The above changes will free our Historian,

Jack Demmons, from those tasks and give him more time for NSA history, and other areas of operations he is involved in.

Much progress is being made within our Association and new members continue to be added to our roster.

The second annual NSA Reunion—to be held in late June of the Year 2000 at Redding, CA—is getting much closer. Dave Nelson, Missoula '57, living at Nevada City, California, also north-east of Sacramento, is in charge of that event. We will have more updated information about that reunion in our January newsletter.

Should you have any suggestions for changes and improvement in your Association, please let us know. Jack for example, would like to know what historical items you would like to see appear in forthcoming newsletters. Please continue to send him your stories and photos.

Roger Savage continues to do a fantastic job with our Web Page, updating and revising it.

Jon McBride, our Treasurer, has done an amazing job in the financial sector of the NSA. He is a perfectionist.

Phil Davis works diligently weekly, updating membership listings in our computer and preparing monthly minutes for Executive Committee meetings.

Since the next newsletter will be mailed out late in January, 1999 I would like at this time to wish you a very happy holiday season during the forthcoming Christmastime and New Year's.

Best regards,


Laird A. Robinson

NSA President

DECEASED JUMPERS AND PILOTS

This listing of deceased jumpers and pilots is current through October 23, 1998. Should dates and other information be incorrect, please let us know. Also, if you have additional information, please forward it.

NAME	BASE YEAR	COMMENTS
DUNNING, GARY	FBX '66	Gary had been rock climbing "bouldering" on Friday, August 28, 1998, a short distance west of Libby, Montana, slipped, and fell to his death. His body was found four days later at the base of a rock wall, known as the Black Eagle Rock, at the end of a Kootenai River road, by the David Thompson Search and Rescue Unit, of which he had been a member. Gary was born April 30, 1940 in Chico, California and came from a long-time family of the area. He was 58 years old. After graduating from high school he joined the U.S. Marines. He was an avid rock climber, sport parachutist and body builder. There had been other past tragedies within his family. Gary's brother Ray had been killed in action on Okinawa in June, 1945 during WW II. Another brother, Garth, had been an outstanding athlete and a teacher at Chico State University. While swimming in Lake Tahoe in north-eastern California he made a dive and never surfaced. His body was never recovered. Gary was well known among many smokejumpers. He had been a rookie at Fairbanks, Alaska in 1966. He was stationed there through 1968. While in Alaska Gary was one of only a few smokejumpers to ever parachute from a B-26 medium bomber that was used for a short time as a jump aircraft. On one jump from the B-26 he had the worst malfunction of his career. He had to pull his emergency chute and it barely opened in time prior to his crashing into some brush. Gary then jumped out of Cave Junction, Oregon from 1969-1974. In 1975 he transferred to the West Yellowstone, Montana jumper unit. In 1978 he was given the title "Yellowstone Park Squad Leader." In that role he jumped for the Park Service during the fire seasons with the other jumpers, and then worked the rest of the year on other projects in the Park. In 1986 he was part of a booster crew that flew north to Alaska. During one jump that season he landed on a spruce snag. A stob—part of a dead branch—penetrated his right thigh. While "pinned" to the tree, Gary released his canopy, grasped the stob and rocked back and forth until it broke loose from the snag. He fell about 20 feet, holding on to the stob all the way to the ground. His jump partner, Thad Duell, McCall '56, was the first to reach him. A helicopter was dispatched and flew him to Fort Yukon (where the Porcupine River flows into the Yukon River) about 150 miles northeast of Fairbanks. A Twin Beech Volpar was waiting for him at Fort Yukon and he was soon in a hospital at Fairbanks where they removed the stob from his thigh. Gary kept that piece of wood as a souvenir and jumpers remember he kept it highly polished. (NBC interviewed him some time after the accident.) While recuperating from injuries in the hospital his position as Yellowstone Park Squad Leader was abolished. Gary left the smokejumpers for awhile after that, but BLM (Bureau of Land Management) jumpers at Boise heard about his situation and Mark Clarkson, Redmond, Oregon '65, managed to get him a position with the Alaska unit. Gary was able to retire in 1994, thanks to the Alaska smokejumpers. They pitched in and helped pay for the portion of his retirement that applied to his part-time work as a jumper in earlier years. Gary died doing one of the things he liked best in life. His greatest love was for his two sons, Shawn and Shane. Much of the above information came from Bill Craig, Missoula '66 and Chuck Sheley, Cave Junction '59. Both had jumped with Gary. Bill attended Gary's funeral at Libby, Montana.
NAGEL, GARY	AIR TANKER PILOT	Gary died Monday, Oct. 5, 1998, when his twin-engine Grumman S-2 fire retardant bomber, a former U.S. Navy aircraft carrier plane, crashed while fighting a fire near Banning, California west of Los Angeles. He was 62 years old and had resided at Columbia, California west of San Francisco. He was a veteran of 30 years in aviation. Gary had been employed by San Joaquin Helicopters of Fresno. The firm was working under contract with the California Department of Forestry. His widow is also a pilot. Chuck Sheley, Cave Junction '59, Ron Stoleson, Missoula '56 and Jack Mathews, Missoula '48, gave us this information.
ST. CLAIR, BERNARD	MYC '48	Bruce Egger, McCall '46, reported that Bernard passed away April 10, 1998 at Olympia, Washington. He was a retired engineer. After completing his initial training at McCall he was assigned to the Idaho City base along with 10 other jumpers. He later jumped out of McCall in 1949 and during 1950 returned to the Idaho City unit. He was born January 1, 1926 and was from New Meadows, Idaho. Bernard graduated from the University of Idaho and received a degree in engineering.
WESTERGARD, BILL H.	MYC '51	Neal Davis, Base Manager at McCall, told us Bill passed away August 23, 1998. He had jumped from 1951-1952 and again in 1961 out of McCall. It is believed he died at Boise. If anyone has more details, please let us know.
CALDWELL, ROBERT L	MYC '46	Jim "Smokey" Stover, McCall '46, mentioned that Bob had passed away. He was once a professor of philosophy in Arizona. Does anyone have more information?

CORRECTION: In the July, 1998 newsletter we reported on the deaths of air tanker pilots **CHUCK KEY** and **J.D. DONAHUE** this summer. We stated that Chuck was from Mesa, Arizona and J.D. had resided at Grand Junction, Colorado. Those two addresses should be reversed.

STORIES FROM THE PAST

WALLY DOBBINS MISSOULA '47

Wally was born at Hamilton, Montana in 1922. For a good part of his younger life he and his brother Jack lived with a grandmother and they traveled across a good part of the United States during her efforts to find work to help support them. They were at Post Falls, Idaho in 1937 and Wally packed his clothes into a gunny sack and took off, ending up in Thompson Falls, Montana where he had a great uncle. He went to high school there, living with his relative at times, and also in a dormitory, and worked to pay for his board and room.

After graduating from high school Wally worked for awhile with the Northern Pacific Railroad as a "gandy dancer," working on track lines, and then for more than a year he worked underground in a mine in the Wallace, Idaho area.

After WW II broke out Wally was in Hawaii working for Morris Knudson, helping construct underground fuel storage tanks. Then it was back to the continental United States and Thompson Falls where he again worked for the NP Railroad, and then at Geiger Field in Spokane.

In 1945 he enlisted in the U.S. Army and served with the Corps of Engineers, serving in the Philippines and Okinawa. In 1947 he returned from Okinawa and once again returned to Thompson Falls. It was there that he met Marion and they were engaged in 1948, the year he enrolled at the University of Montana.

During summer months he worked as a smoke-jumper out of the Missoula base, beginning in April 1947. Wally mentioned the time he and others were returning from a fire out of Priest Lake, Idaho in one of Bob Johnson's Tri-motors. They were flying along the Clark Fork River and as they neared Thompson Falls, Wally asked the pilot, Slim Phillips, if he they could circle the town and let him drop a message for his fiance who was working in a local bank. Slim was always ready for such action and readily consented. Wally attached a note to one of the drift chutes and as they passed over the town threw it out. They continued to circle to see if anyone picked up the message. The chute landed at the corner of a service station. They saw a fellow

flat on his face poking at the chute with a long stick—used to check the level of fuel in underground tanks, apparently fearful that it might be a bomb. The note was retrieved and eventually delivered to Marion, telling her Wally would be up to see her that Friday. As the Tri-motor landed in Missoula at Hale Field Fred Brauer, one of the foremen, was waiting with hands on his hips, asking, "Just what in hell has been going on?" He had received phone calls about the incident. However, nothing more was said. Fred was a real leader and deeply respected by the jumpers.

Once during 1948 Wally was returning to the Missoula base after spending the weekend in Thompson Falls. He was traveling at a high rate of speed and hit construction work north of Missoula. All four struts for the shock absorbers were broken on his Frazer vehicle. He got back to the base and asked Earl Cooley, the base manager, if he could take some time off and drive to Spokane to sell the car. Cooley

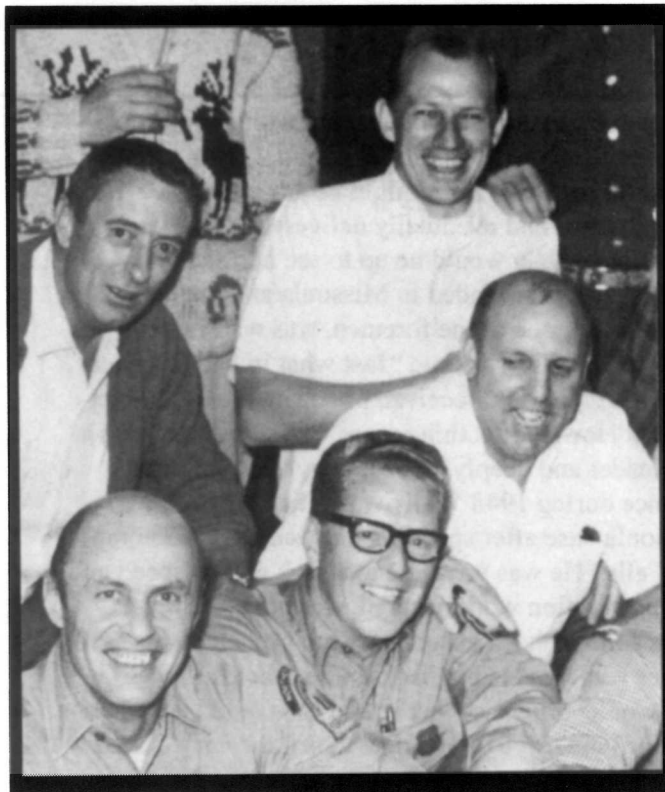
agreed, and another Missoula jumper, Hugh Fowler, went along. Wally sold the car and got almost what he had had paid for it in Missoula. He then chartered an aircraft to fly them to Thompson Falls. From there Hugh hitchhiked the approximately 100 miles to Missoula while Wally stayed overnight and caught the Northern Pacific passenger train back to Missoula the next morning.

In 1951 Wally spotted two jumpers on a fire in the Clearwater National Forest from a Travel Air 6000, One was injured when he

Continued on page 6



Left to right: Art Cochran and Wally Dobbins at Deming, New Mexico in 1949, a Missoula spike camp at the time. They are standing in front of a Noorduyn Norseman.



Back Row: left to right-Jack Wall, Paul Tag; Front Row: left to right-Len Krout, Bill Wood, Wally Dobbins. The picture was taken at Marana, Arizona in the 1960's.

landed in the top of a tree. The pilot radioed for help and on the way back to Missoula the Travel Air met a Tri-motor outbound with a rescue crew of eight on-board.

Wally said the eight jumped a short distance from the injured man and six received minor injuries—they became the “walking wounded.” Len Krout was in charge of the rescue mission and was not injured. Through the use of a Stokes Stretcher—a stretcher that had a wheel mounted under it—the “walking wounded” managed to get the seriously injured jumper out to a road and then to a hospital.

Wally said Len later wrote an article for Saga magazine about the jump and the title was, “I jumped into Hell.” Some time after that in Missoula a jumper wrote in the dust on the back of Len’s Kaiser car: “I jumped into Hell and drove this car back.” (We are not certain who the seriously injured jumper was. Do any of you know? Several rescue jumps were made in Region 1 forests about the same time during the latter part of July, 1951. Does anyone have a copy of that Saga magazine?

WALLY DOBBINS, CONTINUED

If so, please get in touch with us. Len later became the Missoula base manager. He is deceased.)

Wally graduated from the University of Montana in 1952 and was recruited by the C.I.A. to work on an overseas project in Taiwan. After two years he resigned from the organization and returned to Montana and was employed by the Thompson Falls School District as a teacher and coach through 1957. He completed graduate work in 1958 and continued as a smokejumper during the 1958-1959 season.

Wally was injured on a jump out of Riggins, Idaho in 1958. At the time he did not know that one ankle was broken. He hobbled around with a stick and wasn’t feeling any pain because of a shot of Demerol. High winds prevented an evacuation that day, but the following morning he was airlifted by helicopter to a bridge near Riggins and then driven in a truck to Grangeville. Wally said they did not know that a Twin Beach aircraft was waiting for him at the airport, so he and others had steak dinners downtown. After being flown to Missoula he found his ankle was shattered and he was in surgery for a considerable period of time.

He and Marion then moved to Arlee, Montana where he taught until 1960, at which time he accepted an assignment to teach on the island of Guam in the Pacific Ocean area.

Wally then worked in Thailand for a short period of time and other points in Southeast Asia. He returned to the states and was employed by the Department of Agriculture at Marana, Arizona through 1969. He then resigned from governmental service and began working with the Marana school system. In 1987 Wally retired and he and Marion moved to Tucson, Arizona where they currently reside.

He has lived a very active and interesting life. He travels back to his old “stomping grounds” at Thompson Falls every year and is very active in that school’s reunions. He and Marion take care of a friend’s home every summer in Missoula from June into September and then head back to Tucson.

Wally and Marion have four sons, Dave, Jeff—a former smokejumper, Peter and Gilbert.

He recently commented: “Every smokejumper is a character, well blessed with unique traits.” That most certainly applies to Wally.

LUCKY TO BE ALIVE

Bruce jumped out of McCall during the 1946-48 seasons. He trained at Nine Mile west of Missoula for one month and then returned to McCall. Bruce made a total of 30 jumps during his smokejumper career. He was a native of McCall, Idaho and had attended Kansas State University.

During WW II he served with G "George" Company, 2d Battalion, 328th Infantry Regiment of the 26th Infantry ("Yankee") Division in Europe and few saw as much combat as he did, and survived. Bruce went



This photo of Bruce was taken in Austria September 21, 1945, after the close of WW II. Photo courtesy of Bruce Egger.

through action of the type many have seen in the movie, "The Saving of Private Ryan."

He was shipped to France in October 1944 and served briefly with an artillery battalion. On October 26 he joined G Company of the 328th Regiment.

Bruce served in almost continuous front-line combat action until the end of the war, except for brief periods of rest behind the lines.

While he had some close calls, he was never wounded. At one time his life was saved when a piece of shrapnel

was deflected when it hit a copy of the New Testament that he carried in a breast pocket of his field jacket. He never missed a day of duty.

At that time a rifle company had approximately 187 men. During the period when Bruce was with G Company 625 soldiers served with the unit because of the high turnover from deaths, injuries, wounds, etc. K.I.A.'s (Killed In Action) numbered 51, plus another seven died from wounds, for a total of 57 K.I.A.'s. There were 183 W.I.A.'s (Wounded In Action). Of that group, ten were wounded a second time, so the total figure for W.I.A.'s was 193. (There were also 116 cases of trench foot and 51 of frostbite.) When he first joined G Company in October 1944 only one man had been killed and no one had been wounded. Bruce, during his time in combat, served in France, the Ardennes region of Belgium, and Germany.

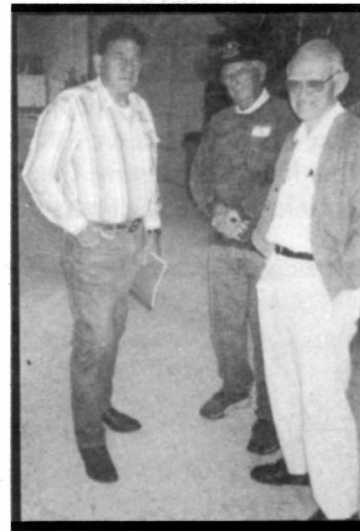
After the war Bruce and Lee Otts, who was also with

BRUCE EGGER MCCALL '46

G Company, wrote a book, G Company's War: Two Personal Accounts of the Campaigns in Europe, 1944 - 1945. It was published in 1992 by the University of Alabama Press at Tuscaloosa and is now out of print, although Bruce believes a second printing will be made before long.

Stephen Ambrose wrote Citizen Soldiers—first printed in 1997. It covers the U.S. Army from the time it hit the beaches of Normandy in France on June 7, 1944, until the surrender of Germany on May 7, 1945. Ambrose refers to Bruce in eight different sections of his book.

Bruce has commented: "During the war we were cold and miserable much of the time, and we were



Left to right, Kenny Roth, MYC '46, Ralph Wilde, MYC '46, and Bruce Egger, MYC '46. During June 26-28, 1998, they were taking part in the McCall, Idaho smokejumper base's 50th anniversary.

Photo credit: Jack Demmons

scared to death, but we were young and strong then, possessed with the marvelous resilience of youth, and, while hating every moment of it, the war was great, even though it was a terrifying adventure. None of us would want to go through it again, but we are all proud of having been so severely tested and found adequate."

After the war, in 1951, Bruce obtained a B.S. in Forestry from the University of Idaho. He later married Leora, a native of Oregon. He became a forester with the Forest Service

and was a district ranger, among other assignments. Of his 29 years of service, 19 were spent at Bly, Oregon and Pomeroy, Washington. Bruce retired July 11, 1979 and he and Leora live at Prineville, Oregon. He is a very active member of the N.S.A. and has provided a number of names of former jumpers and pilots who had been among "the missing."

WEST YELLOWSTONE



Left to right: Larry Eisenman and Bill Craig at the Missoula base in Sept. 1998. Larry was once the Missoula base manager and was back helping on the ramp during the very busy fire season late this past summer. Bill was on standby as a West Yellowstone squad leader. The name "Eisenman" in German means "iron." Bill said Larry was known as the "Ironman."

back into place. It is possible he once broke a rib during a jump and did not know about it until quite some time later. When not jumping he calls Helena, Montana home.

Bill grew up on a ranch in what was known as the Austin area, about 15 miles west of Helena. Austin was a small railroad siding that no longer exists. Years later he trained in the area for the Governor's Cup, a 26-mile marathon race that was held during the first Saturday each June. He once ran it in 3 1/2 hours.

He completed high school in Helena and the summer after graduating worked on a trail crew out of the Lincoln Ranger District, 40 miles northwest of Helena.

Bill then took rookie training to be a jumper at Missoula in 1966. During the off-seasons

Bill Craig, a jumper at the West Yellowstone, Montana base, has jumped each season since 1966, and he is one of the few smokejumpers currently serving among all of the nine jumper bases in the United States who has that much experience. He has made more than 500 jumps, which includes in excess of 200 fire jumps. He has never suffered a serious injury. During his first fire jump in 1970 out of Redding, California he suffered a badly bruised heel and on another jump, a dislocated shoulder that was quickly "popped"

BILL CRAIG MISSOULA '66

he attended the University of Montana and earned a degree in business administration.

During the 1967 season he jumped out of West Yellowstone for the first time, being detailed out of Missoula. He was at the Grangeville, Idaho base in 1968 and 1969, and at Missoula from 1970 through 1974. He has been at West Yellowstone from 1975 to the present time and is a squad leader with that unit. During his years as a smokejumper Bill jumped out of every base—to include the Alaska unit's spike camps, or "out stations,"—except Idaho City and Boise. Will he continue jumping? Bill takes it one year at a time.

Bill has seen many humorous incidents during his career as a smokejumper. One was the time during the Safety Harbor Fire near Lake Chelan in northwestern Washington when 70 Missoula jumpers were returning to the fire from Wenatchee, Washington and had been having a great time on their two buses on the way back. Rondey Lay, MSO '67 had purchased a very long, wide necktie in that city and in getting off the bus, preparing to head for the fire camp, he had fallen on it. Bill and Tom Morga, MSO 69, were trying to help Rondey to

his feet and did not notice that they were slowly strangling him because one of Rondey's knees was resting on his tie. (He did not have a shirt or T-shirt on.) The harder Bill and Tom pulled, the tighter the necktie clamped about Rondey's throat.

Bill said: "The best experiences I have had in life involved jumpers, who are incredible people, and I want to thank those who made it possible for me to remain a jumper for 32 years."



Jumpers preparing to board a Twin Otter for the trip back to West Yellowstone from Missoula on Sun., Sept. 10, 1998. Left to right, back row: Brad Sauer; Squad Leader, Greg Anderson, Base Manager; Mark Duffy; Doug Carroll, a BLM jumper; Larry Wright; Mike Uszuko, a former Missoula jumper and now ramp manager for aircraft; and Romie Carpenter, Twin Otter pilot. Left to right, front row: Bill Craig, Squad Leader; Matt Allen, BLM jumper; Timo Rova; and Jim Sites

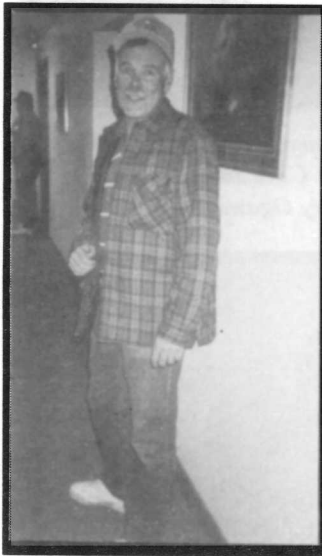
Photos courtesy of Jack Demmons

MCCALL SMOKEJUMPER 55TH ANNIVERSARY

During the period June 26-28, 1998 the McCall base held its 55th Anniversary. More than 400 former and present-day jumpers and pilots who have jumped and flown out of McCall, Idaho City, and/or Boise were at the reunion, plus a number of jumpers and pilots from other bases.

The weather did not cooperate and it was rather cool and windy, with rain and hail, but that did not stop the festivities and demonstration jumps—some at ceiling minimums.

As mentioned in the McCall brochure, relating to the anniversary, "They are coming to celebrate what began as an experiment in 1939, to tell old tales, and to honor friends who were lost in the line of duty." It was a great gathering and the McCall base personnel, past and present, really put on a show. The hospitality was outstanding. The anniversary was very well planned, prepared and executed. It brought back many, many memories to a great number of individuals.



Neil Davis, McCall '69, McCall Base Manager, at the McCall Base June 26, 1998.

Neil has been very helpful to the NSA in providing names, events, and historical information during the past five years.

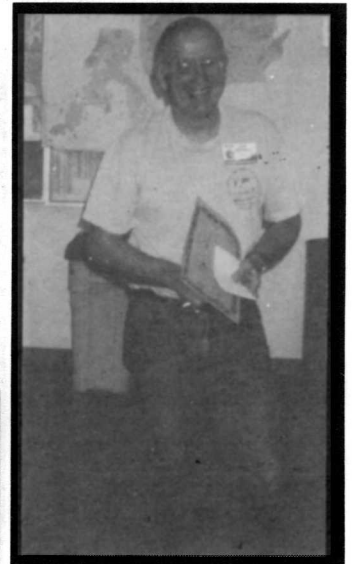
We mentioned much of the McCall base history in previous issues of The Static Line, but would like to mention some of the base's highlights again. Much of the following information came from the brochure the base mailed out prior to June 26-28, 1998. (It is an outstanding brochure.) The base started operations in 1943 when five jumpers, who

trained at Nine Mile west of Missoula, were assigned to McCall. John Ferguson—now deceased—and Lester Gahler—also deceased—made the base's first jump on August 14 of that year on Captain John Creek. Stewart "Lloyd" Johnson spotted them. Lloyd served as the base foreman through the 1953 season.

McCall trained 50 jumpers—25 were rookies—in 1947 and as the program expanded so did the facilities and the base became a training center. In 1948 ten jumpers who trained at McCall were stationed at Idaho City to the south, under Jim "Smokey" Stover. In 1970 the Idaho City base was moved to Boise, and then that

base was closed in 1979. As a result, the McCall base expanded from 55 to 80 jumpers. A new smokejumper facility was completed in 1988 at its present location. Seven national forests surrounding McCall average 1,000 fires each year.

The brochure has an "In Memory" section. Lester Lycklama was the first McCall smokejumper to die in the line of duty. He was killed in 1946 by a falling tree on his first fire jump—in the Payette National Forest. Jumper spotter Ken "Moose" Salyer and pilot Byron "Skip" Knapp died when their Twin Beech crashed on Norton Ridge in the Boise National Forest while on a cargo dropping run July 9, 1965. Pilots Marvin "Whitey" Hachmeister and John Slingerland died when their DC-3 crashed in the Selway River while on a flight from Grangeville, Idaho to Moose Creek in the Nez Perce N.F. June 11, 1979. Roger Roth and James Thrash died in the South Canyon Fire near Glenwood Springs, Colorado July 6, 1994. Fourteen fire fighters were overrun by a fast-moving brush fire.



Leo Cromwell, Idaho City '66. Leo has produced an outstanding compilation of Region 4 Smokejumper History. The title is Who's Who in Region 4 Smokejumping 1943-1997.



*It includes a complete alphabetical listing of Region 4 jumpers, 1943-97, with bases and years jumped. There are yearly rosters, overhead, ages, years of jumping, seasons, career jumps, fire jumps for each jumper, pilots, aircraft, and much more. Leo states: "No other profession links the past with the present as does **Smokejumping**. Stories told in the 40's seem very similar to those being told in the 90's." If you are interested in Leo's masterpiece contact: McCall Smokejumper Base, PO Box 1026, McCall, Idaho, 83638, Tel # 208-634-0383, FAX 208-634-0385.*

Continued on page 10

MCCALL SMOKEJUMPER 55TH ANNIVERSARY CONT.

Continued from page 9



View of the McCall Smokejumper Base Headquarters. It is an outstanding facility.



Part of the McCall 50th Anniversary Reception Committee. Left to Right: Tom Koyama, Cave Junction '74; Tom Dwyer, Redding '79; Jerry Ogawa, McCall '67.



Clark Noble, McCall '70, about to tell some stories.



Del Catlin, McCall '47, was just arriving.



Left to Right: Paul Wilde, McCall '46; Earl Dodds, McCall '49; and Ralph Wilde, McCall '46. They too had stories to tell from the past.



Vladimir Drobachin, One of two Russian smokejumpers who jumped out of McCall during the 1998 season.



"Wild Bill" Yensen, McCall '53, was telling the young McCall jumpers in the background some hair-raising tales. As we all remember, Bill is an expert at engraving knives.

MCCALL SMOKEJUMPER 55TH ANNIVERSARY CONT.

Continued from page 10



Left to Right: Thomas "T. J." Thompson, Missoula '55; M. C. "Bud" Filler, McCall '52. T. J. is pointing to Tim Larson's painting "Checking the Wind Drift." Tim is from Nampa, Idaho and has done several smokejumper paintings and has been selling prints. Bud posed as the spotter in this painting. Gene Frank's Trimotor N-1077 was used for the painting of N9642, a former Johnson Flying Service Tri-motor that Penn Stohr Sr. and Bob Vallance were killed in when it crashed near Townsend, Montana June 19, 1957. Gene, of Caldwell, Idaho, has sold N-1077, the oldest Ford in existence, and it has been moved out of Idaho.



Eldon Askelson and Matt Harmon in the U.S.F.S.'s Twin Otter, N141Z, at the McCall base. McCall jumpers were getting on-board, preparing for a jump to be made on behalf of those attending the 50th Anniversary. Eldon flew out of the Missoula base for a number of years before transferring to McCall.



McCall jumpers at work on the packing tables. Tim Schaeffer, MYC '92, is on the left. The entire area is surrounded by smokejumper pictures. The little girl was hoping she could help.



McCall jumper, Jerry Ogawa, MYC '67, returning from a demonstration jump June 26, 1998. It was hailing and raining.



The McCall jumper base sign stands close to the training units, which are out of sight to the left.



McCall's Twin Otter, N141Z, sitting on the ramp.

MCCALL SMOKEJUMPER 55TH ANNIVERSARY CONT.

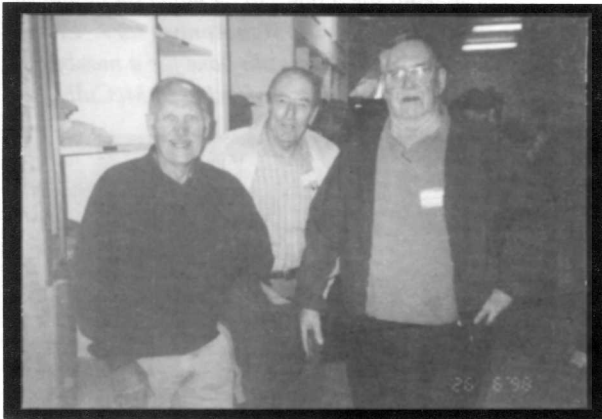
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McCall Reunion Pictures Courtesy of Jack Demmons, NSA Historian.



McCall Rookie Jumpers preparing for a practice jump June 26, 1998. They are boarding a Twin Otter, N141Z.

Left to right: Tim Larson and Jim Larkin. Tim is standing by his latest smokejumper painting: "Last Jumper Out Over Redfish." Tim resides at Nampa. Jim is a former Jumper Pilot and lives in Boise. He is one of five pilots who signed the prints.



Missoula Jumpers crashed the party. Left to right: Art Jukkala, MSO '56; Jack Wall, MSO '48; Roland "Big Andy" Anderson, MSO '52.

A McCall Jumper hard at work on smokejumper gear, June 26, 1998.



The McCall jump tower with logo attached. The training site is very close to the base's building complex.

Steve Mello, MYC '74, returning from a demonstration jump Friday, June 26, 1998, during McCall's 55th Anniversary. He had jumped in the rain and hail.



HOWARD FLINT, A PIONEER IN THE USE OF AIRCRAFT FOR AERIAL FIRE PATROLS



Howard Flint is standing at the far right, next to the pilot, a Mr. Shieck. The date is 8/11/34 and this was the first aircraft to land at the Fish Lake airstrip, which is situated at an elevation of 5,631'. The strip is located slightly north of the ridge that separates the Lochsa and Selway River drainages and is in the Clearwater N.F., about 21 miles southwest of the Powell Ranger Station.

The plane is a Stearman C3B. The word "Patrol" can be seen on the lower part of the rear fuselage. This plane cruised at 108 mph, and could seat two passengers. Note the tail skid. Photo courtesy of the U.S. Forest Service.

Howard Flint was a forestry inspector, who was inseparably connected with Nick Mamer during the period 1932-1935, in the pioneering of aerial activities in the Northern Rocky Mountain Region.

Flint had entered the Forest Service in 1910 and was assigned to fire control in the Region 1 office out of Missoula in 1920. He began experimenting with aerial mapping and borrowed a camera from the U.S. Army in order to pursue that activity. Flint flew with various fire patrol pilots in carrying out his duties. He helped organize the first of these patrols, which began operating from Spokane, Washington in 1925, with Nick Mamer being the first such pilot in the northwestern part of the nation. Flint flew with Mamer many times. During the 1930's Howard Flint also began to investigate the possible use of dirigibles for transporting men to fires.

He passed away on Tuesday, Oct. 15, 1935 after becoming ill while on a trip down the Salmon River on a barge with a National Geographic Society expedition. He was acting as the radio operator.

Dick Johnson of the Johnson Flying Service flew in from Missoula with a Travel Air 6000 to

Mackay Bar in the southcentral part of the Nez Perce N.F., near Deadman Rapids, in a canyon to meet the expedition and pick up Flint. He had to fly upriver for awhile because of dense fog in the area, bank sharply to miss the walls of the canyon, and then fly down under the fog toward the bar. There wasn't any airstrip on Mackay Bar at that time and Johnson had to dodge obstacles on the beach in order to land.

The National Geographic barge landed at the upper end of the small bar and Flint was carried to the Travel Air. He said to Dick, "I knew you be able to get me out." They had been close friends for a long time.

Two days after being rescued Flint passed away in a Missoula hospital. Those on the barge did not know at the time that he had died. An observation plane of the Washington National Guard was not able to make radio contact, as was the daily custom, because of bad weather.

The Missoulian reported that three Army Air Corps planes from Spokane flew low in formation over the funeral services at the Missoula cemetery and the pilots dipped the noses of their aircraft in a final salute to Howard Flint.

A.N. COCHRELL, ASST. FOREST SUPERVISOR. & LT. EDGAR C. BIGELOW, FOREST FIRE PATROL PILOT

On a mid-August Sunday afternoon in 1930, a patrol flight was scheduled, following a severe lightning storm of the previous evening. Lt. Edgar C. Bigelow, piloting an Eaglerock biplane, landed at Newport, Washington (40 miles northwest of Spokane) and picked up A.N. Cochrell who would act as an observer. At that

country of the Pend Oreille River too far away for a forced landing.

Behind them, about one-half mile, was an open grassy ridge with a steep slope facing a timbered saddle. Bigelow banked the aircraft sharply and glided over the timber, pulling up over the open slope, and made a perfect landing.



Left to Right: Howard Flint and Lt. Edgar Bigelow, standing by an Eaglerock aircraft at Spokane in 1930, prior to taking off on a fire patrol. Photo courtesy of the U.S. Forest Service.

It had been only a matter of seconds, but during that time Bigelow had taken time to answer a questioning look from Cochrell, with a nod toward the selected spot, and a smile of assurance, Cochrell said later.

After landing Bigelow's first comment was, "What do you suppose happened to the old girl?"

The engine was a Wright Whirlwind

time Cochrell was Assistant Forest Supervisor on the Kaniksu National Forest.

A few moments after taking off they spotted two previously unreported fires in the flat country near Cusick, 30 miles northwest of Newport. They thought it best to return to Newport and report those fires.

After taking off from Newport the second time, their flight path was northward along the Pend Oreille-Priest River Divide. When the plane was almost directly over the North Baldy Lookout, the engine suddenly quit, without so much as a sputter. Ahead, and on both sides, there was nothing but steep timbered slopes, with the open

(15). A hasty investigation showed that the timing gear had failed. It was the same kind of problem that made a pilot named Roe, with Howard Flint along as an observer, make a forced landing in the St Joe area of Idaho southeast of Spokane a year earlier. Timing gears seemed to be a weakness with that type of engine.

Lt. Bigelow was sure the Eaglerock could be flown out safely if repairs were made. The Forest Service lookout at North Baldy called Spokane and Roy Shreck was soon on his way with the necessary tools to repair the plane. (This was the same Schreck who later did much flying for the

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A.N. COCHRELL AND LT. EDGAR C. BIGELOW CONTINUED

Continued from page 14



Albert N. Cochrell. He was born in Nebraska in 1895 and passed away at Longstaff, Arizona in 1971. He is shown by a listing of Nez Perce N.F. Supervisors—he served in that capacity from 1944-1956, retiring February 28, 1957.

Photo courtesy of June B. Cochrell, his daughter-in-law, who resides at Sante Fe, New Mexico.

Forest Service under contract, and who later crashed in the Coeur d' Alene N.F. one winter. No one knew where he had gone down at the time and he was presumed dead. However, he walked out to civilization after struggling for miles through deep snow.)

During this hot August, Shreck, with his tools, arrived where Lt. Bigelow and Cochrell had been downed. He had traveled by horseback for 15 miles to the North Baldy area. By that evening the aircraft, high up on the mountainside, had been repaired, but it was too late to attempt a takeoff.

Early the next morning it took much pushing and maneuvering to get the airplane up to the top of the ridge and facing downhill along what was deemed to be the best "runway." The distance was short for the 6,000 foot elevation, but Lt. Bigelow, with Cochrell and Shreck riding along in the front seat of the biplane, flew the aircraft off without mishap. However, Cochrell and Shreck later said they had spent a few anxious moments before being safely airborne. It was another adventure for one of the early-day aerial fire patrols.

GONE WEST

Howard Flint said in part, in his article "Gone West," written in 1931: "Soon after Bigelow completed his Forest patrol contract he became a pilot for Varney Air Lines and flew the mail from Salt Lake City to Portland, Oregon, by way of Pasco, Washington. It was the evening of November 26, 1931 and he was attempting to land at Pasco where heavy fog had closed in. He made his 'final port' in the only serious crash of his career as a pilot, a career that dated back to the beginning of WW I when he was a pilot in the Canadian Air Service.

"He will be remembered by those who knew

him in the Forest Service for his quiet, cheerful devotion to a job which called for a high degree of courage and optimism. He left a wife and daughter."

Editor's Note: The information for this article about Lt. Edgar Bigelow and Albert N. Cochrell came from June Cochrell, Albert's daughter-in-law, who mentioned that A.N. Cochrell first started with the Forest Service on July 5, 1913 as a forest guard (smokechaser) in the Clearwater National Forest and ended his career as Supervisor of the Nez Perce National Forest on February 28, 1957. He had served in seven national forests and the Region 1 office.

IDAHO CITY SMOKEJUMPER BASE CONTINUED

Editor's note: The Idaho City jumpers were moved to Boise, Idaho in 1970. Most of the jumpers at that U.S.F.S. base had originally jumped out of Idaho City. The BLM (Bureau of Land Management) base at Boise would be established later.

In 1971 fire activity started early, with details being sent to Alaska, New Mexico and Arizona. Then there was a long, slow span through July and most of August, with another bust during the last week of August.

Karl Hartzell, Mark Nelson, John Cramer, Robert Totten, Allen Muench and Stan Ramsay each suffered

The jumpers made two trips to Alaska that year and one to Oregon. They were in Alaska from the middle of June until the middle of July. During the balance of the season they were kept busy fighting fires in Region 4.

During 1972 Evan Simmons, Tony Beltran, Anell Slavick and Pete Fallin each received pins for having made 50 jumps during their careers as smokejumpers. Francis Mohr and John Cramer received 100 jump pins and Stan Ramsay a pin for 150 jumps.

They jumped on 88 fires that year, for a total of 229 jumps, or an average of 8.5 jumps per man.

For the 1973 season there were 30 jumpers to include seven NEDS—rookies. The year started with two of the rookies fracturing their legs on their second practice jumps and were unable to continue in the program.

There was much traveling during 1973, to include flights to bases at Winthrop, Washington (NCSB), Fairbanks, Alaska (FBX), Redding, California (RDD), Redmond, Oregon (RAC) and Cave Junction, Oregon (CJ). In addition, 16 jumpers were dispatched to Reno, Nevada. The first fire they jumped on was June 17 in the Wenatchee National Forest and the last October 17 in the Sawtooth



Left to right: Bob J. Montoya, Guy G. Hurlbutt, Jim M. "Dyke" Nally, and Jim "Smokey" Stover. The year is unknown, but possibly in the late 1960's. They appear to be having some kind of a celebration and Bob was caught unawares.

injuries while jumping that year.

Some experimental jumps were tried from a twin-engine de Havilland Caribou, but the highlight of the year for the jumpers was capturing first place in the annual Boise "Keep Idaho Green" raft race.

There were 34 jumpers at the base—eight more than the previous year. This included seven new men.

In addition to fires jumped on in Region 4, others were made in Montana, Alaska and New Mexico.

During the 1972 season all of the smokejumpers were returnees and refresher training was conducted at Boise on the new training units for the first time.

The base utilized only one aircraft, a Forest Service Douglas C-47 (similar to the civilian DC-3 version).

National Forest of Idaho.

Julio Bilbao, Ken Burns, Earl Fields, Ed Kral, Rodger Mello, John Purlee and John Shoemaker each earned pins for having made 50 jumps during their careers. Herb Corn received a 100 jump pin.

The year 1973 was the end of an era. Jim "Smokey" Stover, the smokejumper foreman since the Idaho City base was first founded in 1948, and who stayed with the organization through to its move to Boise, retired. He had started jumping out of McCall in 1946. Bob Montoya became the acting foreman for the rest of the year. (*Stories from Idaho City smokejumpers will be continued in future editions of The Static Line.*)

BOB HOOPER, CAVE JUNCTION '67

In the July 1998 issue of The Static Line we had pictures of the Siskiyou—Cave Junction—jump base. We are including some more of Bob Hooper's pictures in the October 1998 newsletter.

Bob has loaned us a great number of slides that apply to the Siskiyou and Alaska jump bases. In the January newsletter we will begin articles on the Alaska bases through the years, to include the one that was once located in Anchorage.



The Siskiyou jumpers made many letdown's from tall timber through the years. Drawing by Ken Morris, Associate Member.



Bob Hooper, CJ '67, preparing for a fire jump, summer of 1970. Left to right: A Twin Beech C-45 and a Douglas DC-3 are in the background. Photo credit: Bob Hooper.



Tom Albert, Cave Junction '64, riding along and resting in a Twin Beech after taking off from Cave Junction for a fire near the California line in 1967. Tom is now the chief pilot for the North Zone—Region 5. Photo credit: Bob Hooper.



Siskiyou jumpers being checked out by spotter Larry Lufkin, CJ '63, prior to boarding a Twin Beech for a fire call during the summer of 1967. Photo credit: Bob Hooper.

FRACTURED FABLES FROM THE FIRELINE

BY CHARLIE PALMER, MISSOULA '95

Charlie is an active Missoula Jumper. "Silk Stories" was originally started by Scott Belknap, McCall '83, who now jumps out of Missoula also. We are still looking for current jumpers from the various bases to write articles for The Static Line. We need more current jump stories and information.

RAMS AND ROUNDS

Human beings have a tendency, albeit mostly illogical and unproductive, to view whatever group they happen to be in as something superior or better than other groups. Strange as it may seem, this happens, when, in actuality, the groups possess many more commonalities than differences. Examples abound in the world around us, and may be seen in the complicated relations between different racial groups, the struggles amongst religious factions, and the battles waged by political parties. Similarly, but in much less dramatic ways, this intergroup superiority complex is evident in such things as the fly fisherman versus spin fisherman debate, the rifle hunter and bow hunter argument, and the skier against snowboarder conflict.

Unfortunately, such a conflict exists today in the smokejumper world between Forest Service "rounds" and Bureau of Land Management "squares." Despite the fact that we jump from the very same type planes, that both groups use nearly identical equipment, and that we all employ similar fire suppression tactics, a tension between BLM and FS jumpers continues due simply to parachute shape. This is not meant to imply that the groups are incapable of working together. On the contrary, the summer of 1998 provided yet another example of how members from the two organizations can work side by side, and do so very efficiently. However, some strange, amorphous, yet ever present tension, still exists between us.

The root of between-group conflict can be traced to competition for similar, yet limited resources. Jews and Palestinians fight over small parcels of land, just as fly fishermen and spin fishermen do over stretches of water. Likewise, BLM and FS jumpers compete over potential new members, federal funding, and new areas in which to provide fire suppression services. Some competition serves a healthy purpose, and helps each group become stronger. However, taken too far, it can do much more harm than good. As smokejumpers,

regardless of canopy shape, we must always remember we share a unique bond as brothers and sisters in the sky. The battles we have to fight are challenging enough. If we divide ourselves from within, our ability to fight these battles becomes greatly diminished.



A BLM (Bureau of Land Management) jumper descending with a Ram-Air parachute in 1998. In 1979 tests were conducted by Alaska BLM jumpers to determine the feasibility of using Ram-Air chutes for smokejumping. In 1982 the Ram-Air parachute system became operational for BLM jumpers in Alaska and at Boise. A picture of a "Round" parachute can be seen on page 19.

Ford Tri-Motor Jump

JUNE 1, 1998

MCMINNVILLE, OREGON

The planned Ford Tri-Motor jump, using Evergreen International Airlines Model 5-AT-8, NC9645, took place a short distance out of McMinnville, Oregon on Monday, June 1, 1998. The jump was made in connection with the production of the Historical Smokejumper Video. (See insert relating to the progress being made on the video.) Four men made the jumps and will be featured in the final version of the video. The National Smokejumper Association is deeply grateful and thankful to Del Smith, owner of NC9645 and head of Evergreen International Airlines, for having made this flight possible, without cost to the NSA; and to pilot Penn Stohr Jr., Senior Vice President of Flight Operations for Evergreen; the jumpers and spotter; and others who were involved. The plane was modified, so static lines could be attached to a cable installed inside, somewhat similar to cables once placed in former smokejumper Tri-Motors. This aspect of the video has a very important, historical significance. Both "Round" and "Square" chutes were used in order to have the flight be representative of smokejumping from 1939-1998, even though "Square" chutes were never used during smokejumper Tri-Motors days.



Bill Moody, Winthrop, Washington, '57, descending from Evergreen International Airline's Tri-Motor NC9645 on June 1, 1998. Bill is wearing Francis Lufkin's bright red jump suit and is using a round chute.

PISIDHI INDRADAT, ASSOCIATE MEMBER

In the October 1995 and January 1996 issues of The Static Line we had articles about Air America members Eugene "Gene" DeBruin, MSO '58; Psidhi Indradat; Prasit Promsuwan; Prasit Thanee (all three Thais); and radio operator To Yick Chiu, a Chinese from Hong Kong. They were shot down over Laos on Sept. 5, 1963 while on a flight to drop rice and buffalo meat from a twin-engine Curtiss C-46, about ten minutes flight time out of Ban Hœuri San. Shortly after Gene and the other four bailed out, the plane exploded in a giant fireball, killing the two pilots.

After the four were captured, they were moved from one prison camp to another and tortured repeatedly. Later, two Americans were imprisoned with them, U.S. Navy pilot Lt. Dieter Dengler and Lt. Duane W. Martin, a U.S. Air Force helicopter pilot. Finally, on the morning of June 29, 1966, after almost three years of confinement, they managed to escape, killing some of the guards. The three Thais went together. Martin and

Dengler teamed up and Gene was supposed to accompany them. However, the radio operator, To Yick Chiu, was sick and Gene, risking his life, decided to escape with his ill friend.

In the end, Martin was macheted to death in a small village and Dengler was rescued by an American helicopter. Psidhi was recaptured and then escaped once more. He managed to reach American authorities in 1968. The fate of Gene, the other two Thais, and the Chinese is still unknown. Gene's brother, Jerry, of Toledo, Ohio, has devoted years trying to discover what happened to Gene.

Fred Rohrbach, MSO '65, came across Psidhi in Bangkok this past year and enrolled him in the NSA for two years, which was a very fine gesture.

Psidhi told Fred that Gene was the finest man he had ever met, and that he will never meet another one like him. Fred was again in Bangkok recently and once more visited with Psidhi.

Some time ago, FRED BRAUER, MSO '41, suggested we publish stories about jumpers and pilots and see if our members can identify who the articles are about and ask for responses, which will be published later. Others since then have also recommended such stories. We will start with Missoula jumpers and pilots in this issue and then continue on with other bases in the future. In a number of instances we do not know the identities and would appreciate your responses. Please send in such stories from the other bases.

DO YOU KNOW, OR DID YOU KNOW?

Back in the early 1940's a Missoula jumper training at Nine Mile decided to experiment and see if he could make his landings softer. He took some mattress springs and attached them to the bottoms of his boots. He "boiinged" out of the Tri-Motor and landed in a tree, which ripped the springs off. That was the end of the experiment. Who was he?

A Ford Tri-Motor was heading back from a fire and Bob Johnson was at the controls. He had a friend along who was riding in the right seat—not a pilot. Suddenly the plane pitched upward and Bob was fighting the controls. His friend was about to look for a harness and chute. The plane leveled out and continued on. Suddenly, the plane pitched even more violently upward. Bob Johnson was very concerned, but again brought the Tri-Motor to an even keel. Then, the same thing happened a third time, but Bob happened to glance back just as the plane reared up. There in the back were two jumpers (spotters) who had been leaning out the door of the Tri-Motor and were pulling down on the elevator control cable with pulaski's. There was hell to pay later. Who were these two jumpers?

Another time a twin-engine Douglas C-47 was returning from dropping jumpers on a fire and was cruising south over Flathead Lake north of Missoula. Suddenly, people on both shores watching the rather low-flying plane, saw two chutes blossom out and drop into the lake. There were frantic phone calls, people were shouting and screaming. Boats were cranked up and roared out on rescue missions. Sirens screamed—accompanied by the howling of dogs—as police cruisers roamed the shorelines, trying to find vantage points to see what was happening. Calls were made to Missoula to alert authorities that there might be casualties. The C-47? Why, it flew blissfully on to the south. The radio was not working. However, when it approached the Missoula airport those on-board could see a man standing by the jumper operations building with hands on his hips, waiting for them. Fred Brauer gave them a welcoming speech after they landed. What was said is best left unsaid. It so happened that the three jumpers (spotters) on-board had thrown out several drift chutes (this was before the days of streamers) to create a little excitement. Who were they?

In the 1960's some Missoula jumpers were having a party in an apartment of one of the men on the north side of town. There was plenty of booze, to include kegs of beer. When a keg was emptied it was simply tossed out a window. Then, one of the jumpers, when the mood was upon him, would dash out and pre-

tend the kegs were bongo drums, beating on them with pieces of firewood, accompanied by the lusty singing of his companions inside. Out the window came several more empty kegs. Soon, two of Missoula's "Finest" arrived to investigate and castigate. Who were the jumpers who were involved?

Back in the 1950's the FBI was looking for several unsavory individuals who had committed federal offenses. Two jumpers had rented a motel on the western outskirts of Missoula and looked like two toughs since they had not shaved for a number of days and had been partying for a considerable period of time. One left to pick up some more beer and the other jumper decided to take a shower, and was singing lustily. The door to their unit was not locked. The FBI rushed in with drawn guns. One agent ripped the shower curtain back and thrust his gun in the face of the warbling troubadour, who jumped two feet and almost s _____. It turned out to be a case of misidentification. Who were the they?

In the 1970's two Missoula jumpers were on detail at the Grangeville base. On a pleasant Sunday afternoon they decided to take two local gals for a boat ride on the Salmon River. The gallant crew launched their "cruiser," and shortly there was much shoutin' and hollerin'. The boat was filling with water. The intrepid, fearless sailors managed to get the boat back to shore before it sank. The problem? Why, the drainplug had not been fastened. The lads had been out late the previous evening and were rather bleary-eyed. They had not noticed—could not see that far—that the plug had not been secured. Who were these smokejumper "sailors"?

A number of years ago some former Missoula jumpers were at Marana, Arizona 20, miles northwest of Tucson. There was a very tall flag pole with a light on top. It had burned out. The time before when that happened two fellows had been paid \$700.00 to go up and replace it. Two of the former jumpers volunteered for the job, thinking they too would be paid the same amount. One rigged up a boatswain's chair and helped hoist the other one aloft. The light was changed and there was great anticipation about how to spend the forthcoming \$700.00. It so happened however, that all they received were several free drinks. Now that did not sit too well with the one who had gone aloft. What did he do? Why, he secured a rifle and proceeded to shoot the light out. Who were these two former jumpers? *(Send in your answers and please forward stories from other bases for future issues of The Static Line.)*