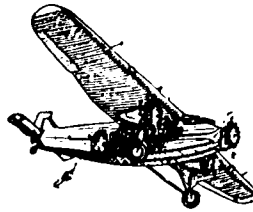




# THE STATIC LINE

## NATIONAL SMOKEJUMPER ASSOCIATION

P.O. BOX 4081  
MISSOULA, MT 59806-4081



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VOLUME 1

QUARTERLY

JANUARY 1999

EDITION 6



## **THE STATIC LINE STAFF**

**COMPILER-EDITOR: JACK DEMMONS**

**ADVISORY STAFF: DON COURTNEY,  
ART JUUKALA, ROGER SAVAGE**

**COMPUTER OPERATORS:**

**PHIL DAVIS, JACK DEMMONS, ROGER SAVAGE**

# **PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE**

In the October '98 newsletter we mentioned that Chuck Sheley, Cave Junction '59, Chico, California and Monroe "Spud" DeJarnette, Missoula '49, Auburn, California, were assisting our organization in the areas of merchandise orders and new and renewal memberships, and they have been doing a great job. Chuck's color insert showing NSA merchandise was outstanding and he has been receiving many orders. (Chuck stood the cost of this brochure for now—more than \$1,000 for the inserts. This time that insert is in black and white. Save your colored one.)

On April 9, 1999 the NSA Board of Directors will be meeting in the Bob Marshall Room at the Missoula Jumper Base from 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. for their annual meeting. Suggestions for the agenda are due in to the NSA headquarters by January 31. We will report the results of that meeting in the April, '99 newsletter.

One of the inserts in this newsletter pertains to nominations for Board members. Those whose three-year terms will be expiring June 30, 1999 are: Carl Gidlund, Missoula '58; George Gowen, Missoula '54; Bill Moody, Winthrop, '57; Larry Moore, Idaho City, '59; and Chuck Sheley, Cave Junction '59. With the exception of Carl Gidlund, who is very involved with NSA activities, those named will be running for office again. **If you have someone you wish to nominate, please fill out the nomination form and have it returned to NSA headquarters by**

**March 20, 1999.** Voting on those nominated will take place in April of this year. Biographical sketches and ballots will be provided in the April newsletter, and the ballots are to be returned by June 15, 1999.

We have included Base Summaries for the 1998 year in this newsletter. Also, a listing of 1998 Rookies from all of the bases. Each was given a free one-year membership in the NSA by direction of the Executive Committee. (This was also done for the 1995 Rookies.)

Please note the information provided below pertaining to the **REUNION 2000, June 16-18** of that year.

Currently we have more than 1,160 members scattered throughout the world and in every state except two, and the list continues to grow. Should you know of anyone who might be a prospective member, please let us know. There are still many of "The Missing" in our Data Base File. Roger Savage, MSO '57 and Phil Davis, MSO '48, have been doing a great job in helping update that file.

We will be back in touch with you in The Static Line in April. Until then, we wish you the very best.

Best regards,

Laird A. Robinson  
NSA President

## **REUNION 2000**

**Mark your calendars now for June 16-17-18 in Redding, California for the NSA Reunion 2000.**

The Reunion Committee is working hard to make this the biggest Smokejumper Reunion ever. The room rates are great! There are many things to do and see in the Redding area and Northern California. Make this a family vacation. Reunion room rates will apply a few days before and after in order that you may take the time to vacation on Northern California.

The Redding Convention Center will be the site of the Friday BBQ and Saturday night dinner/dance. Saturday afternoon the outdoor amphitheater will be the location

for music on the green. You can relax and visit old friends while enjoying adult beverages/soft drinks and plenty of silk stories.

**Reunion packets will be mailed out in January, 2000.**

We are always updating our roster of names. If you know of any jumpers who don't get the Static Line, or whom you think are not on our roster, please forward names, addresses, phone numbers or whatever information to Chuck Sheley, (530) 893-0436, or e-mail to: [cnkgsheley@earthlink.net](mailto:cnkgsheley@earthlink.net) in order that they too might receive a reunion packet. (Of course, forward such names to the NSA headquarters also for updating of files.)

**SEE FIRST PAGE OF INSERTS FOR FURTHER INFORMATION**

# NATIONAL SMOKEJUMPER ASSOCIATION 1998 INCOME STATEMENT

National Smokejumper Association  
1998 Income Statement

**Income**

**Membership Income**

Interest Income	\$1,987.91	
Life Membership Income		\$1,139.88
Memberships - New	\$2,885.00	
Memberships - Renewals		\$18,782.75
Refund	\$175.00	
<b>Total Membership Income</b>		<b>\$24,970.54</b>
<b>Income from Sales of Merchandise</b>		
Merchandise Sales - Chico	\$2,899.26	
Merchandise Cost - Chico	\$1,965.34	
<b>Net Income on Chico Merchandise Sales</b>		<b>\$933.92</b>
Merchandise Sales - Missoula	\$6,320.82	
Merchandise Cost - Missoula	\$6,176.39	
<b>Net Income on Missoula Merchandise Sales</b>		<b>\$144.43</b>
<b>Total Income from Merchandise</b>		<b>\$1,078.35</b>
<b>Total Income from Memberships and Merchandise</b>		<b>\$26,048.89</b>

**Expenses**

<b>Membership Coordinator Expenses</b>		<b>\$62.03</b>
<b>Banking Expenses</b>	<b>\$253.80</b>	
<b>Computer Expenses</b>		
Consultants	\$875.50	
Other	\$713.81	
<b>Total Computer Expenses</b>		<b>\$1,589.31</b>
<b>Life Member Expenses</b>		
Knives	\$3,000.00	
Plaques	\$1,075.18	
Other	\$22.50	
<b>Total Life Member Expenses</b>		<b>\$4,097.68</b>
<b>Newsletter</b>		
Printing	\$4,175.50	
Postage	\$1,413.98	
Photo Reproduction	\$900.00	
Other	\$938.01	
<b>Total Newsletter Expenses</b>		<b>\$7,427.49</b>
<b>Office Operating Expenses</b>		
Office Manager's Stipend	\$2,400.00	
Rent and Utilities	\$2,196.78	
General Supplies and Expenses	\$2,060.90	
Telephone	\$1,495.27	
Depreciation Expense	\$612.67	
<b>Total Office Operating Expenses</b>		<b>\$8,765.62</b>
<b>Presidential Expenses</b>		
Travel	\$800.00	
Other	\$264.21	
<b>Total Presidential Expenses</b>		<b>\$1,064.21</b>
Miscellaneous	\$680.22	
<b>Total Expenses</b>		<b>\$23,940.36</b>
<b>Net Income</b>		<b>\$2,108.53</b>

Jon McBride, NSA Treasurer, Missoula '54, has done an outstanding job in his role. He came on-board as Treasurer in mid-January 1998. In preparing the 1998 Income Statement for the National Smokejumper Association, he was assisted by Larry Lufkin, Cave Junction '63. (Jon currently lives in the Missoula area and Larry's residence is at Olympia, Washington.)

Should you have any questions, please call or write the NSA office, tel. (406) 549-9938; PO Box 4081, Missoula, MT 59806-4081.

National Smokejumper Association  
Balance Sheet  
As Of December 31, 1998

**Assets**

<b>Short Term Assets</b>	
Checking Account	\$147.35
Primary Savings Account	\$4,255.43
<b>Total Short Term Assets</b>	<b>\$4,402.78</b>
<b>Restricted Assets</b>	
Museum Fund	\$7,730.24
Reunion Fund	\$11,141.40
Video Fund	\$32,828.30
Life Membership Permanent Fund	\$28,462.50
Life Membership Residual Fund	\$3,468.94
2-year Membership Fund	\$5,347.11
5-year Membership Fund	\$6,535.36
10-year Membership Fund	\$2,970.62
<b>Total Restricted Assets</b>	<b>\$98,484.47</b>
Equipment	\$1,838.00
Less: Accumulated Depreciation	(\$612.67)
<b>Net Equipment</b>	<b>\$1,225.33</b>
<b>Total Assets</b>	<b>\$104,112.58</b>

**Liabilities and Fund Balance**

Liabilities	\$0.00
Fund Balance	\$104,112.58
<b>Total Liabilities and Fund Balance</b>	<b>\$104,112.58</b>

## NEW MEMBERS

Note: This listing of new members includes those who joined between October 17, 1998 and January 15, 1999. Those who join after January 15, 1999 will be mentioned in the 23rd Newsletter, which will be sent out in late April 1999. Should names be misspelled, or addresses be incorrect or changed, please let us know as soon as possible.

NAME	ADDRESS	BASE YEAR
Clarke, Donald	1851 E Hawthorne, Colville, WA 99114	MSO '68
Conway, Brian	2214 E Montebello, Phoenix, AZ 85016-2716	ASSOCIATE
DeVoe, Albert "Al"	6801 Rappahannock Way, Carmichael, CA 95608	CJ '47
Gibbs, Kent	1028 Edgewood CIR NW, Arab, AL 35016	MSO '65
Gillen, Jeffrey "Jeff" P.	79 Country LN, Alamogordo, NM 88310	GAC '78
Haiges, Manfred "Manny"	PO Box 344, Kirkland, WA 98083	MSO '58
Ellis, Robert D.	395 S.W. Westvale ST, McMinnville, OR 97128	ASSOCIATE-PILOT
Ellis, Robert	PO Box 994, Seeley Lake, MT 59868	MSO '98
Holober, Frank	9102 Kirkdale RD, Bethesda, MD 20817	ASSOCIATE
Looper, Orville	1810 S Bridge ST, Winnemucca, NV 89445	CJ '49
Monroe, Tom	PO Box 732, Roslyn, WA 98941	NCSB '58
Morton, Dave	Box 41, Pray, MT 59605	GAC '59
Martinez, Jerry	PO Box 154, Camp Crook, SD 57724	RDD '77
O'Bannon, Patrick "Pat"	1100 Redbud DR, Redding, CA 96001	RDD '70
Pepion, Michael "Mike"	PO Box 1118, Darby, MT 59829	MSO '82
Sherwood, Todd R.	PO Box 1149, Victor, MT 59875	MSO '76
Ruiz, Alberto P., USA Ret.	7307 Peaceful Meadows, San Antonio, TX 78250	AFFILIATE

### BEQUESTS

We had asked one of our Directors, George Gowen of New York City, MSO '54, if he would prepare a note concerning bequests and he very happily obliged. This is the information he gave us:  
 HEY JUMPERS, LEAVE SOMETHING BEHIND. The National Smokejumper Association has received several large donations for the Video Project. Your family comes first, but spread the wealth and think of making a will for them and the NSA. Just have it say: I GIVE AND BEQUEATH TO NATIONAL SMOKEJUMPER ASSOCIATION, A MONTANA PUBLIC BENEFIT CORPORATION, OF MISSOULA, MONTANA, .....DOLLARS (\$.....) FOR ITS PUBLIC CHARITABLE, EDUCATIONAL AND SCIENTIFIC USES AND PURPOSES.

If you want us to have some of your TREASURES, just describe them in the will. Get it? MY DIAMOND STICK PIN, MY DIARY AS A JUMPER, MY HISTORIC PHOTOGRAPHS, MY WHITE BOOTS, MY COLLECTION OF BEER BOTTLES. We will be grateful and you'll feel GOOD. It's a promise.

George is a lawyer in New York and has worked for a number of years in the realm of nonprofit foundations. He has given us much help during the past six years.

### N.S.A. LIFE MEMBERSHIPS--37

The National Smokejumper Association, as of January 15, 1998, now has 37 Life Members. They are: Keith L. Beartusk, MSO '68; Tony G. Beltran, MYC '69; Dave Bennett, MSO '61; James "Jim" E. Blaine, MSO '63; Fred O. Brauer, MSO '41; F. James "Jim" Clatworthy, MSO '56; George Cross, MSO '74; David "Dave" R. Cuplin, MSO '48; Robert "Bob" L. Derry, MSO '43; Charles "Chuck" Fricke, MSO '61; Orval W. Gastineau, MSO '63; George W. Gowen, MSO '54; Mike Greeson, MSO '59; Joseph "Joe" J. Gutkoski, MSO '50; Donal "Don" W. Halloran, MSO '53; Wallace "Wally" D. Henderson, MSO '46; Tom Kovalicky, MSO '61; Richard A. Kreitzberg, MSO '52; Gerald "Jerry" J. Linton, MSO '48; Lee G. Lipscomb, MSO '58; Michael "Mike" D. McCullough, MSO '56; Ben O. Musquez, MSO '56; Jim Murphy, MSO '48; Bill D. Poppie, MSO '58; Robert "Bob" Quillin, FBX '71; Robert E. "Bob" Reid, MSO '57; Fred G. Rohrbach, MSO '65; Maynard Rost, MSO '58; Loren C. "Bud" Rotroff, RDD '67; Michael "Mike" D. Seale, Associate, Former Air America Pilot; Roland M. "Ron" Stoleson, MSO '56; H.W. "Skip" Stratton, MSO '47; Thomas "T. J." Thompson, MSO '55; John J. Tobin, MSO '59; Thomas "Tom" R. Uphill, MSO '56; Dick Wilson, MSO '48; Anonymous.



# NEW MEMBERS CONTINUED, ROOKIES OF 1998

The National Smokejumper Association has given all of the 1998 Rookies a one-year free membership in the NSA. Base Codes are as follows: **GAC-Grangeville, ID;** **FBX-Fairbanks, AK;** **MSO-Missoula, MT;** **MYC-McCall, ID;** **NCSB-Winthrop, WA;** **NIFC-Boise, ID;** **RAC-Redmond, OR;** **RDD-Redding, CA;** **WYS-West Yellowstone, MT.**

Baker	Shawn	PO Box 2013	Twain Harte	CA	95383	RDD
Baraibar	Inaki	NCSB RT 1 Box 180	Winthrop	WA	98862	NCSB
Beck	Jeremy	123 Takima DR	Missoula	MT	59803	MSO
Bennett	Billy	204 Springdale DR	Union	SC	29379	WYS
Booker	Ron	PO Box 837	Quincy	CA	95971	RDD
Brinkley	Joe K.	HCR 30 Box 11	Burns	OR	97720	MYC
Chavez	Thad	Current Address Unknown				MSO
Dale	Matt	1000 NW 6 <sup>th</sup> AV	Canby	OR	97013	NCSB
Denowh	Shawn A.	Current Address Unknown				MYC
Deveraux	Tony L.	Current Address Unknown				MYC
Dollard	Deak	2810 Spriggs LN	Lander	WY	82520	MSO
Drake	Lance A.	PO Box 1065	McCall	ID	83638	MYC
Duffy	Mark	302 7 <sup>th</sup> ST	Belgrade	MT	59714	WYS
Ellis	Robert	PO Box 994	Seeley Lake	MT	59868	MSO
Faulkner	Jeannine	PO Box 1307	Bethel	AK	99559	MSO
Frazen	Todd E.	Current Address Unknown				MYC
Garrett	Don	Pleasant Grove RS 390N100E Pleasant Grove	UT		84062	GAC
Gustafson	Daniel M.	255 University Terrace	Reno	NV	89503	MYC
Hartman	Derrek	PO Box 464	Seal Beach	CA	90740	RDD
Humphrey	Ty	441 Nelson RD	Hallsville	TX	75650	FBX
Jaramillo	Kenneth	Grangeville Air Center RT2	Grangeville	ID	83530	GAC
Jenkins	Todd	Box 5	Montfort	WI	53569	NIFC
Johnson	Todd	36883 Parson CR RD	Springfield	OR	97478	NIFC
Kilner	Rod A.	1340 Tioga	Reno	NV	89503	MYC
LeMay	Cory M.	Current Address Unknown				MYC
Lim	Terry	PO Box 1623	Truckee	CA	96160	RDD
Linch	Valentine	12150 HWY 178	Lake Isabella	CA	93240	RDD
Liston	Dave	PO Box 1045	Girdwood	AK	99587	FBX
Martin	Craig J.	RT 2 Box 448	Bishop	CA	93514	MYC
McDonnell	Michael J.	470 Moon DR	McCall	ID	83638	MYC
Mendoza	Manny	140 Alberta ST	Kalispell	MT	59901	GAC
Miller	Jason T.	PO Box 654	Soda Springs	CA	95728	MYC
Morrow	Scott	669 E 11 <sup>th</sup> AV	Salt Lake City	UT	84103	RDD
Musitano	Mark	1779 23 <sup>rd</sup> ST	Cuyahoga Falls	OH	44223	RDD
Newman	Chad	Grangeville Air Center RT2	Grangeville	ID	83530	GAC
O'Brian	Mike	7878 N Wilding DR #20	Spokane	WA	99207	FBX
O'Donnell	Taig	410 W Garfield	Bozeman	MT	59715	MSO
Parker	John C.	PO Box 4025	McCall	ID	83638	MYC
Roach	Tom O.	2555 Island View DR NE	Bemidji	MN	56601	FBX
Russell	Kathleen	602 Power DR	Eldorado Hills	CA	95762	NCSB
Sawyer	Brad S.	PO Box 6016	Twin Falls	ID	83303	MYC
Sawyer	Brent D.	205 Settlers Way	Jerome	ID	83338	MYC
Schricker	Jeff P.	1600 M AV Apt B	Le Grande	OR	97850	MYC
Shultz	Robert J.	Current Address Unknown				MYC
Sites	Ashley	PO Box 833	Gardiner	MT	59030	WYS
Sites	Jim	PO Box 833	Gardiner	MT	59030	WYS
Spencer	John	980 Kookaburro Run	Wenatchee	WA	98801	NCSB
Stark	Todd	11108 Chennault Beach RD	Mukilteo	WA	98275	FBX
Stephens	Erich	HC 60 Box 4050	Delta Junction	AK	99737	GAC
Stephenson	Peter	6101 Airport RD	Redding	CA	96002	RDD
Vangundy	Steve	PO Box 136	Stonyford	CA	95979	RDD
Wallace	Cynthia	613 Overlook Way	Missoula	MT	59803	MSO
Walls	Michael	2521 S AV W	Missoula	MT	59804	MSO
Wardman	George S.	Flat 54 Room B G1Spring Garden	Aberdeen, Scotland	AB251GN		GAC
Wilson,	Brian	1507 SO Main ST	Sheridan	WY	82801	WYS
Yamamoto	Andrew	7439 Pomelo DR	West Hills	CA	91304	RDD
Zavalla	Anthony	PO Box 1674	Santa Cruz	CA	93460	MSO

# SMOKEJUMPER BASE ACTIVITIES 1998

BASE	NO. MALE JUMPERS	NO. ROOKIES	NO. WOMEN JUMPERS	NO. FIRE JUMPS WITHIN REGION	NO. FIRE JUMPS AS BOOSTER CREWS	NO. RESCUE JUMPS	NO. DATE FIRE SEASON ENDED	BASE AIRCRAFT UTILIZED
H. Wainwright, AK FBX—BJM	65	5	0	174	246	0	?	1-C23-Sherpa 2-CASA 212's
Boise, ID NIFC—BJM	60	2	3	322	130	0	10/30/98	2-Bandicant's—EMB 110's 3-DHC-6Twin Otters (1 Govt, 2 Contract)
Grangeville, ID—GAC	25	5	3	130	26	0	9/18/98	1-DHC-6Twin Otter
McCall, ID—MYC	72	16	1	284	183	0	9/18/98	1-DC3-C 2-DHC-6Twin Otters
Missoula, MT—MSO	56	10	4	235	119	0	9/22/98	1-DC3-C 1-C-23A Sherpa
Redding, CA—RDX	41	10	1	253	71	0	9/24/98	1-C-23A Sherpa 1-DHC-6Twin Otter
Redmond, OR—RAC	30	0	5	452	0	0	10/8/98	2-C-231 Shermas 1-DHC-6Twin Otter
West Yellowstone, MT—WYS								
Winthrop, WA—NCSB	18	4	1	190	2	0	10/15/98	1-CASA 212

## Retirements:

MSO - Thomas "Otto" Carlsen 7/98. Otto was a rookie in 1970.

RAC - Gary Stelle, Redmond Air Center Manager.

## Change of Positions for Key Personnel During 1998:

Fairbanks - Leonard Wehking (Lead Spotter), FBX '85, left to become the Carson City District FMO (Fire Management Officer.).

Boise - None.

Grangeville - Chris Young, GAC '92, and Marge Kuehn-Tabor, RAC '81, were promoted to squadleaders and Robin Embry, GAC, '85, filled the Loft Supervisor position. Chris Hertel, GAC '91, and Brett Rogers, GAC '92, were temporarily promoted to squadleader positions. Tom Bates accepted the Sawtooth IHC (Interagency Hotshot Crew) Foreman position and Leroy Holguin, GAC '97, accepted a fire/fuels CO-Op position on the IPNF (Idaho Pandle National Forest).

McCall - Clark Noble, MYC '70, Loft Foreman, transferred to the National Park Service. NIFC Training Specialist Barry Koncinsky, MYC '74, is the new McCall Loft Foreman. Greg Beck, MYC '78, McCall Squadleader, transferred to Whitefish, Montana as Station Foreman.

Redding - Bob Richardson, RDD '86, was promoted to a Fire Engine Operator's position on the Cleveland N.F. Cathleen Lowe, RDD '91, was promoted to an RX Crew Boss position on the Coronado N.F.

Redmond - Steve Dickenson, La Grande '78, is moving to Boise, Idaho. Dan Torrence is the new Redmond Air Center Manager, replacing Gary Stelle.

Redding - Robert Richardson, RDD '86, was promoted to a GS-7 Fire Engine Operator's position on the Cleveland N.F.

Winthrop - Frank Clements, NCSB '88, was promoted to Squadleader and Daren Belsby, NCSB '86, was promoted to Temporary Squadleader.

## Additional Base Information:

Doug Houston, Winthrop Base Manager, RAC '73, married ex-smokejumper Paige Taylor, FBX '95, this past May. We had mentioned Paige in the October, 1996 newsletter after she had been severely injured on a fire jump in California in the Klamath N.F. on July 28th of that year, when the suspension lines in her main chute—a square—became entangled. She managed to cut her main away and deploy her reserve at 700 feet, but crashed through 130 foot tall trees, breaking her back and an ankle, among other injuries. Paige was originally from Plains, Montana. She would like to go back smokejumping.

Two Russian smokejumpers, Vladimir Drobachin and Victor Ponomarjev, spent the summer with the McCall jumpers.

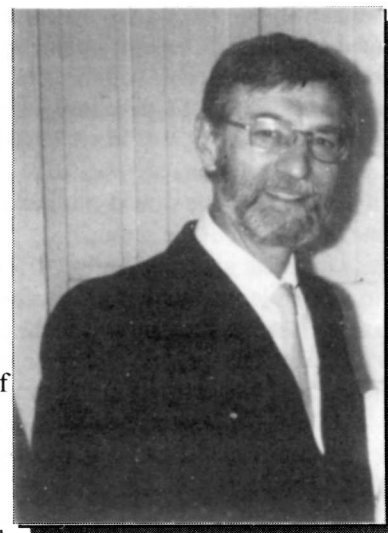
# DECEASED JUMPERS AND PILOTS

**T**his listing of deceased jumpers and pilots is current from October 24, 1998 to January 15, 1999. Should dates and other information be incorrect, or if you have additional information, please let us know. Thanks.

NAME	BASE YEAR	COMMENTS
<b>CUMLEY, WILLIAM "BILL" MSO</b>	<b>'50</b>	Bill passed away at Helena, Montana on Thursday, December 24, 1998. He had been suffering for some time of an alzheimer related disease. Bill had served with the Immigration and Border Patrol operations for a number of years. He is survived by his widow Gwen of Helena, his brother Del of Missoula. and four youngsters. Like many Missoula smokejumpers through the years, Bill was originally from the Bitterroot Valley south of Missoula. He and his brother Del both joined the Missoula smokejumpers at the same time in 1950. (Del's wife passed away in Missoula about one year ago.)
<b>DILLER, KEN</b>	<b>CJ '43</b>	Ken's widow, Verla, wrote to tell us that Ken died August 16, 1998. He had been residing at Bluffton, Ohio for quite some time. She said Ken really enjoyed his smokejumper days and reading the newsletters about them. If you have more information about Ken, please let us know.
<b>MALONE, MICHAEL E. MSO</b>	<b>'53</b>	Mike passed away at a Seattle hospital on December 22, 1998. He had been visiting relatives at Redmond, just east of Seattle. Mike and his wife were residing at Polson, Montana. (In 1994 they had been living at Meridian, Idaho.) He was 63 years old. He is survived by his widow Ella and three daughters. A private interment took place at St. Mary's Cemetary in Missoula January 4, 1999. Mike was a retired United Airlines pilot and a retired U.S. Navy Reserve commander. He had served two tours of duty in Vietnam as a combat pilot, and received numerous commendations and awards, including the Distinguished Flying Cross. He was well known for his fearless love of life, his loyalty to others and his nonstop sense of humor.

In our October, 1994 newsletter we mentioned an episode that happened to Mike on August 13, 1956. He was the spotter on a Travel Air of the Johnson Flying Service. Two jumpers had been dropped on a fire in the Nez Perce N.F. Frank Small, father of Wally Small, MSO '52, was at the controls of the aircraft and suddenly became ill and called the Forest Service at 1:40 p.m., saying he going to try and land at the Elk City strip. (The plane was heading back to Grangeville, Idaho at the time.) Frank told Mike to keep his parachute on, that he might have to jump if he (Frank) collapsed. With sweat poring down his face and trying to remain conscious, Frank brought the Travel Air in for a landing. He stepped out of the ship and collapsed. A doctor arrived at 2:30 p.m. but Frank had died.

**MELLIN, DAVID R. RAC '66** We had briefly mentioned Dave's death in a previous newsletter. We received more information from his brother Ralph, MSO '60. Dave was age 52 when he died at his home in Twin Falls, Idaho Monday, January 26, 1998, from a heart attack. Ralph told us tobacco appeared to be a major cause of his death. He had been taking care of his mother for some time prior to her death in 1993. He was born June 10, 1945 in Boise. Dave graduated from Camas County High School in Fairfield, 70 miles east of Boise, and was the class salutatorian. He attended the University of Idaho and obtained a B.S. degree in range management. Dave then entered the military service and was a paratrooper with the 82d Airborne Division. He later worked for Air America in Laos. At one time he manned a Forest Service lookout in central Idaho. He became a smokejumper in 1966 and served at both the Cave Junction, Oregon and Fairbanks, Alaska bases, and retired as a jumper. He then moved back to Twin Falls. In addition to his brother Ralph, he is survived by his widow Lavona of Boise. He was buried at Boise February 7th.



*Photo of Dave Mellin, courtesy of his brother Ralph.*

Chip Houde, FBX '88, and still an Alaska jumper, wrote to Ralph on March 1st and again on October 14th, and had some stories to tell about Dave. He said Dave had made a total of 317 jumps during his 20+ years as a jumper, and 200 were fire jumps. Chip said, "It is fairly unanimous among the Alaska smokejumpers that Dave was the best 'Drag' man in history. In Alaska fires are typically fought by beating down the edges with spruce boughs. We have to be careful that the fire does not pop up behind us after we pass by. It is the 'Drag' man's responsibility to make certain that does not happen. When Dave was working 'Drag' and said that things were looking good, you could bet your next paycheck on it." Chip arranged to have the Alaska Smokejumper Welfare Fund send a 300-jump pin, a set of Alaska Smokejumper rookie wings, and an Alaska Smokejumper belt buckle to Ralph. Chip also mentioned to Ralph, "I remember Dave well. On a recent evening here in Fairbanks a group of the Bros' got together and hoisted a few beers in his memory and told a few Dave stories."

Smokejumpers do not forget their brothers.

# DECEASED JUMPERS AND PILOTS CONTINUED

*Continued from page 7.*

<b>NAME</b>	<b>BASE YEAR</b>	<b>COMMENTS</b>
<b>ROEMER, JOSEPH J.</b>	<b>MSO '52</b>	Don Halloran wrote a story about Joe earlier this past year. Don, one of our Association's Life Members, said Joe was well known throughout the '50's and well liked by all who worked with him.

## **Remembering Joe Roemer (MSO '52-'59)** by **Don Halloran (MSO '53-'55)**

"On August 7, 1997, Joe Roemer died suddenly and unexpectedly from a viral heart infection. He was 64 years old. He had no symptoms of his condition, jogged with his dog, had dinner with his family at home in Yakima, Washington, and died later that evening in his sleep. He is survived by his widow Phyllis; and three daughters, Katie, Carrie and Kristi.

"He had retired not long before his death, after a long career as a chemist at the Atomic Energy Commission National Laboratory, Hanford, Washington. He was devoted to his family and active in mountain rescue work throughout his career and in retirement. A hobby shared with his family was the breeding of award winning Siamese cats.

"Joe was a competent woodsman, having grown up in Montana and Idaho as the son of a Forest Service ranger. This valuable background served him well on fire crews and hastened his promotion to squad leader by his fourth season in the jumpers.

"Mention the record breaking 1953 fire season, when we averaged over 10 fire jumps per man, and most jumpers will smile with glee and pat their wallets. However, Joe would grimace since he made only one fire jump. When questioned about the single jump, Joe would explain that when walking out of a fire the crew had to cross a creek on a hand-operated cable car. 'Damn, if I didn't get my left index fingertip severed between the cable and the wheel! The worst part was that **Stan Barclay, MSO '51-deceased**, used the severed flesh as bait to go fishing and **Al Casieri, "Wild Al," MSO '52**, kept badgering me with skin and bone questions and wanted to examine the wound prior to getting it bandaged.' The wound was serious enough to keep Joe off the fireline for the rest of the season.

"As a first year squad leader in 1955 Joe headed a five-man crew that was to dismantle and move two log cabins three miles and reassemble them at the Shearer landing strip in the Selway-Bitterroot Wilderness Area of Idaho. The logistics and personnel challenges were daunting. (Those two cabins are still in use at Shearer today.) Our respect for Joe that summer enhanced our own qualities of cooperation, resourcefulness and confidence.

"Most Missoula jumpers had an opportunity to visit with Joe at the 1995 N.S.A. Reunion. It is sad to realize his untimely death will deprive us all of his friendship. I know I speak for others when I say, farewell old friend, and thanks."

<b>MURRAY, ART</b>	<b>CJ PILOT</b>	We found out from <b>Bob Hooper, CJ '67</b> , that Art, who was a jumper pilot at Cave Junction in 1967, and after that year a lead plane pilot on the Wenatchee N.F. for retardant work, died at his home at Medford, Oregon on February 14, 1970, from a heart attack while jogging. He is survived by his widow Kathy. Does anyone have more information about Art?
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<b>POST, REX</b>	<b>MSO '54</b>	In the April, 1996 issue of the Static Line we mentioned Steve Henault, MSO '46, and his death, along with two others, in the crash of an Alaska Army National Guard aircraft at the 14,880 foot level of Mt. Sanford, 200 miles east of Anchorage, on February 19, 1971. He was flying the aircraft to his home base at Fort Richardson, Alaska. We also stated that a two-man volunteer rescue team, made up of famed Alaska mountain climber and guide, Ray Genet of Talkeetna, and Rex Post, a Pan American World Airways captain on leave, had been dropped off from an Army helicopter at the 15,500 foot level in an attempt to reach the wreckage—at the time we did not realize that Rex was also a former Missoula jumper. Rex died on the mountain in the rescue attempt from "high altitude sickness," a situation wherein one's lungs fill with fluid and a person actually suffocates. <b>Connie Orr, MSO '53</b> , gave us additional information about Rex recently. Rex was 38 years old at the time of this death. He had ben living at Seahurst, Washington in the Seattle area. Later, Maj. Gen. James F. Hollingsworth, Commanding General, U.S. Army Alaska, presented an Outstanding Civilian Award—the highest recognition that a military commander can bestow upon a private citizen—to Rex's widow, Gloria Post, at Fort Richardson. <b>Wally Dobbins, MSO '47</b> , has stories about Rex that we will mention at another time.
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*Joe Roemer on Eagle Rock above the Shearer Guard Station, Selway-Bitterroot Wilderness Area, Summer of 1955.  
Photo courtesy of Don Halloran.*



# TRAGEDY AND DEATH HIGH IN THE SAPHIRE MOUNTAINS

During the early evening of Tuesday, November 27, 1945, Ruben and Netta Oeder and friends from Missoula were waiting at the municipal airport for the arrival of their son, Capt. Bill Oeder of the U.S. Army Air Force. He was piloting a twin-engine B-25



Lieutenant W. G. Oeder

*Bill Oeder as a 1st Lieutenant in the U. S. Army Air Force while serving as a fighter pilot in Europe during WW II. Photo credit: The Missoula Sentinel, July 28, 1944.*

medium bomber on a flight from the military air base at Rapid City, South Dakota, where he was stationed. Capt. Oeder, a former Missoula area resident who had learned to fly at the Johnson Flying Service, was a veteran of WWII, which had ended earlier that year. He had been a P-47 fighter pilot with more than 30 missions to his credit in the European Theatre of Operations. Also on-board the bomber were Capt. Robert Peterson, copilot, from Lincoln, Nebraska and crew chief Sgt. John L. Brown from Rochester, New York. The Oeders were very proud of their son and they waited in great anticipation for his arrival. Perhaps he would make a fast, spine-tingling, low-level pass prior to entering the landing circuit. Eyes searched the eastern horizon, hoping to sight the bomber coming in on its approach. Ears strained for the sound of throbbing Wright Cyclone engines, but there was only heavy silence. Time passed. There was nervous conversation and fleeting glances to the east. Darkness fell, and finally the Oeders and their friends left the field with heavy hearts. At home they waited anxiously through the night for a telephone call that would tell them their son was safe. Dawn came, and still there was no report.

The local paper, the Missoula Sentinel, on the evening of the 28th, said that five Army Air Force

planes would be searching for a missing bomber and its three crew members. Pilots of the Johnson Flying Service stood ready to assist if called upon.

On-board one of the military search aircraft was Dr. Amos R. "Bud" Little of Marlboro, Massachusetts, a renowned Army paradoctor with 47 mercy jumps to his credit—he had trained with the Missoula jumpers.

Capt. Paul Timm of the Second Air Force Search and Rescue unit based at Great Falls, Montana reported that Capt. Oeder had radioed the Billings airport at 4:45 p.m. on Tuesday, saying he planned to continue on to Missoula instead of stopping there.

The bomber was last seen flying low west of Deer Lodge, 65 miles southeast of Missoula. Several high school students at Piltzville, 7 miles east of Missoula, heard a plane to the south of them around 6:00 p.m. that evening and noticed the sound of the engines suddenly quit, but they did not hear a crash. A Mrs. Fleming, farther to the east, called the sheriff's department to say she had heard a plane and then what sounded like a crash to the northwest of her.

The Johnson Flying Service was called in by the U.S.A.A.F. to help with the search on Nov. 29th. On Friday the 30th, just before dusk, Bill Yaggy, a former Missoula smokejumper, MSO '41, piloting one of Bob Johnson's Travel Air 6000's, with Capt. Oeder's father and Vic Solander along as spotters, sighted the wreckage. It was in the Sapphire Mountains, high on a mountain ridge in the vicinity of Miller Peak, 7 1/2 air miles southeast of Missoula.

At Missoula smokejumpers were alerted for a rescue mission. Earl Cooley, MSO '40, was put in charge and the search party included veteran jumper Art Cochran, MSO '42, as well as non-jumpers. In the darkness they drove up the Pattee Canyon Road with three horses to a trail head and then began a trek up towards Miller Peak. Quite some time later, as they neared high



*Left to Right: Fred Brauer, and Bill Yaggy, both rookies in 1941, standing next to a Ford Tri-Motor that year in the Six Mile country west of Missoula, preparing for a training jump. Note the large reserve chutes. Photo courtesy of Fred Brauer.*

*Continued on page 10.*

# TRAGEDY AND DEATH IN THE SAPPHIRES CONTINUED

*Continued from page 9.*

ground, Cooley smelled gasoline. The horses were tied to trees and the search party fanned out. Just over a crest, in deep snow, they came upon the wreckage at approximately 3:00 a.m. All three crew members had died instantly. Bill Oeder was 29 years old. The plane had come within mere feet of clearing the ridge—from the crash site one can walk less than 200 feet up a slight incline and see part of Missoula.

At dawn, Capt. Little, along with smokejumpers Bill Wood, MSO '43 and Wag Dodge, MSO '41, parachuted to the scene from a Travel Air 6000. Another ground party reached the wreckage at 9:00 a.m. The remains of the crew members were gathered up, wrapped in tarpaulins, and secured to the backs of the horses. The search members then walked back to the Pattee Canyon Road and a waiting ambulance.

Capt. Robert Fetch, a member of Capt. Oeder's Rapid City unit, flew in and served as escort to the family. On Tuesday, Dec. 12th, after services at the Lucy chapel, rites were held at the Missoula cemetery. There was a large assembly, to include friends from Capt. Oeder's boyhood; fellow pilots; members of the Johnson Flying Service; and others. There was a farewell salute by a firing squad and taps were played by buglers Betty Nicol and Henry Roseth, Jr. The services came to a close after Captain Fetch presented the colors to Capt. Oeder's family that cold, wintry day.

Earlier in the day on Friday the 30th, smokejumper Jim Waite, MSO '40, had been dropped on Harvey Mountain, about 18 miles southwest of Drummond, to investigate previously reported smoke which

authorities thought might be from the missing bomber. What he found were remains of a campfire and horse tracks leading away. Jim sustained a sprained ankle when he landed in an area that appeared to have snow-covered brush, but which proved to be rocks.

## BILL YAGGY'S LAST FLIGHT



*Bill Yaggy standing by a Johnson Flying Service Curtiss Air Sedan at Hale Field in Missoula during 1945.*

Bill Yaggy started pilot training in the first government sponsored civilian pilot training course given at the Johnson Flying Service in 1939. At the time he was a forestry student at what was then known as Montana State University. After completing the course he was a smokejumper for two years, and continued on as a flying instructor for the Johnson Flying Service. He was called into military service early in 1945 and then recalled by the U.S. Forest Service for the fire season that year, after which he returned to active duty. He was discharged several days before he took part in the search for the missing B-25.

On February 21, 1946, less than three months after locating the B-25, Bill Yaggy and passenger Bob McBride were in NC 623H, a Johnson Flying Service Travel Air 6000, sowing grass seed over a burned area 8 1/2 miles northwest of Dixie, Idaho, an old mining town in the Nez Perce N.F. Suddenly, a severe snow-storm moved in over a ridge and blocked all exits. Yaggy said to McBride, "Hey I didn't see that storm coming. We'll circle in the bottom until it blows over." Visibility faded rapidly. McBride later reported, "there was soon the sound of limbs cracking, fabric ripping and a wing spar snapping as the plane plowed into a side of the narrow canyon." McBride, although seriously injured, survived the crash, but Yaggy died on impact. The northern mountains had claimed another victim. Bill Yaggy was 27 years old.

*Continued on page 11.*



*Jim Waite, MSO '40, seated in the door of a Johnson Flying Service Travel Air 6000 while preparing for a training jump at the former Missoula Nine Mile training camp.*

*Frank Derry, veteran instructor-rigger for both the Winthrop and Missoula bases at one time, is checking a two-way radio. The outfitted jumper is unidentified. Jim is retired at Walla Walla, Washington. Photo by John Fossen.*

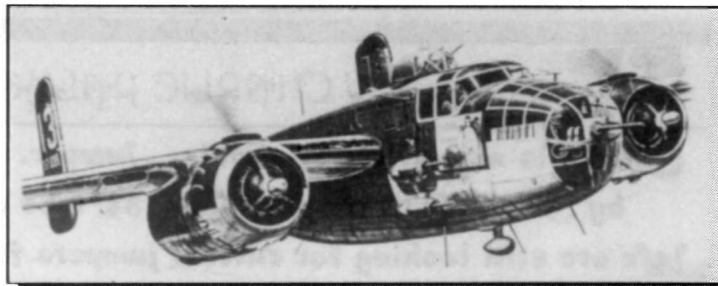
# TRAGEDY AND DEATH IN THE SAPPHIRES CONTINUED

Continued from page 10.

## PARTICIPANTS IN THE BILL OEDER RESCUE ATTEMPT



Bill Wood, MSO '43, dropping a fire pack from a Travel Air 6000. Bill is retired at Beaverton, Oregon. Photo credit: Phil Stranley.



A North American B-25 bomber of the type Bill Oeder was flying.



Capt. Amos "Bud" Little in 1944. He took his initial training with the Missoula Smokejumpers, but then had to take Army airborne training at Fort Benning, Georgia in order to qualify for military jump pay. His rescue jumps during WW II were made primarily along the NE slopes of the Rockies, from Denver to Canada. Once he jumped on a rescue mission from an altitude of 11,000 feet, which at that time was the highest intentional jump anyone had ever made in the United States—to a B-17 crash, July, 1944. He was from Massachusetts and a 1942 graduate of John Hopkins University Medical School. He now lives in Helena, Montana. Photo: Bud Little.



Earl Cooley, MSO '40, Missoula base manager in the 1960's, standing by a Ford Tri-Motor at the base. Earl and Rufus Robinson, MSO '40, made the first fire jumps in the history of smokejumping on July 12, 1940 on Martin Creek in the Nez Perce N.F. Earl is retired in Missoula. Photo Credit: U.S.F.S.



Wag Dodge, MSO '41. He was in charge of the crew that jumped on the Mann Gulch Fire, Aug. 5, 1949. He and two other jumpers survived. Twelve jumpers and a former jumper died. Wag is deceased. Photo Credit: U.S.F.S.



Art Cochran, MSO '42, third from left, assisting Civilian Public Service jumpers prior to a training jump at Nine Mile 25 miles west of Missoula. Art is retired at Stites, Idaho.

Photo Credit: Phil Stanley



# 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**

## ADDICTION TO FIRE

Trace Myers stared at the fire, rarely blinking. Occasionally he would sip from his canteen cup, but this would be the only time that his gaze would break from the flickering flames. Although he had just put in a grueling sixteen hour shift of line digging, he did not feel tired. This was the part of fire fighting that he loved most, sitting around a small cooking fire, drinking strong, black coffee, and simply staring. The flames put him at ease, brought him a sense of comfort he seldom felt at any other time. He had never been able to understand exactly why fire had this effect upon him, but part of him knew deep inside it fulfilled some sort of primal needs. Safety. Warmth. Security. Taking another sip from his cup, he was reminded of the time when an old jumper had told him that fire was one of the greatest of all therapists. At the time he did not fully comprehend just what the man meant by the analogy, but more and more he was beginning to understand.

Trace and five others had jumped the fire at first light this morning. At the time, the fire was only about an acre in size, burning actively at the head, but just slowly creeping at its flanks. Shortly after jumping, the wind had picked up, and what had been about the size of a football field had expanded into the fire's present size of about 20 acres. Several times they thought the fire had been caught, but gusting winds and rolling embers had sent the blaze off on another run that left six jumpers scrambling in an effort to catch up. Normally, they would have called for reinforcements, but a widespread dry lightning storm the night before had left the region depleted of smoke-jumpers. Some fifteen hours after jumping, the six

men had finally corralled the blaze well enough to take a quick dinner break of dehydrated food and candy bars, all washed down with copious amounts of black coffee.

Trace gazed at the small cooking fire, and soon he found himself thinking about how the twists and turns in the road of life had brought him to where he now sat—on a desolate but beautiful Montana mountainside. At 35, he was about average age for smokejumpers. This summer marked Trace's eleventh season of smokejumping, not to mention the six years he had put in before that, on district and hotshot crews. He had started fire fighting his first summer out of high school, and save for one year off, had been doing it ever since. At the urging of his best friend, Logan Trident, both had applied for jobs on a district engine crew when they were eighteen. After two seasons on the Sula District in the Bitterroot Valley of Montana, Trace and Logan had gone their separate ways,

with Logan taking a crewmember job with the Lolo Hotshots, and Trace accepting a similar position with the Bitterroot Hotshots. After four seasons with the 'Shots, each had finally been accepted into Missoula's Rookie Smokejumper program in 1987.

Trace jumped for three seasons after that, but by the time the Spring of 1990 had rolled around he felt he needed a change. Nine seasons of sleeping on the ground and eating bad food, trying to put out fires that in most cases would have done more good if left to burn, had left him sick of fire fighting. It was time to give up this seasonal work, which employed him for



*Charlie Palmer advertising his skills on the sewing machines at the Missoula Base.*

*Continued on page 13.*



## FRACTURED FABLES FROM THE FIRELINE CONTINUED

*Continued from page 12.*

six months at best, and left him scrambling the other half of the year for various odd jobs and whatever meager unemployment benefits he could muster. It was time to quit digging in the dirt, and look for a solid, year-long job. Or so he thought. In the summer of 1990, Trace had taken a job in a local warehouse that paid him a decent wage and promised him full-time employment. Despite getting what he thought he needed, Trace found himself feeling miserably unfulfilled.

It was at this point he realized his addiction with fire. As strong as any compulsion for gambling or alcohol, he needed fire, and only by being away from it did he realize just how powerful this need really was. Fire brought him financial reward, true, but it brought him much more than monetary gain. Fire provided comfort. It brought him piece of mind. Above all else, fire offered an escape. His year away had convinced him that fire was as important to his existence as was the food he ate and the air that he breathed. Trace returned to jumping in the summer

of 1991 with a renewed sense of purpose and commitment, a reawakening that he still felt to this day.

However, as with any addiction, there existed a dark and dangerous flip side. Fire always retains the ability to harm those who get too close, to burn the careless and complacent, just as easily as it can the diligent and prepared. It only seems to pick on the former. Trace had been reminded of this in 1994, when three fellow smokejumpers and eleven other fire fighters had been killed at Storm King Mountain in Colorado. Like other addicts, Trace was firmly planted in the stage of denial. "It cannot happen to me. It will not happen to me."

Taking another sip of his coffee, Trace looked around the small cooking fire. His five fellow jumpers sat quietly, each staring at the fire, each lost in his own thoughts. Finally, after a few more minutes of pensive gazing, Trace stood up, reached for his pulaski, and headed back to the main fire to check the line. Behind him, he heard the sounds of the others doing the same.

## AIR TANKERS THROUGH THE YEARS



*This picture of air tanker A-34, a former WW II B-17G bomber, heavily modified with turboprop engines, was taken by Bruce Fowler, MSO '70, during the summer of 1970. Not long after, the tanker crashed in the Wind River Mountains of Wyoming, 80 miles south of Cody, on August 18, 1970. The modified B-17 hit a tree during a retardant run, lost a wing, flipped over, crashed and exploded. Pilots Ray Elgin and John Bastion were killed. We had an article about that crash in the Oct. '96 newsletter.*



*A Lockheed C-130 air tanker, belonging to Butler Aircraft Corp. of Redmond, Oregon, at Missoula during the 1998 season. This is one of the newest air tankers.*



*Left to Right: Hawkins & Powers' former U.S. Navy WW II PB4Y-2 patrol bomber, now air tanker 123, and Neptune Aviation's Lockheed P2V-7, a post WW II Navy patrol bomber, now designated as air tanker 06, at Missoula during the 1998 fire season. The Hawkins & Powers firm is headquartered at Greybull, Wyoming and Neptune is based at Missoula.*

# THE 1998 SEASON

*Pictures were taken by Jack Demmons*

The pictures shown in this section include jumpers and pilots from the various bases as they trained, jumped and flew out of Region 1. (See Definition of Codes on Page 5.)



*Mark Duffy, MSO '98 Rookie, with parents Bill, MSO '71, and Karen Duffy at Nine Mile, after training jump.*



*MSO '98 Rookie Cynthia Wallace, with FS-14 chute, had just landed at Nine Mile west of Missoula.*



*Left to Right: Winthrop Rookies John Spencer, Matt Dale, Kathleen Russell, and Inaki Baraibar, training at Missoula.*



*Left to Right: Mike Wahl and Manny Mendoza, MSO '98 Rookies, during spring training at Missoula.*



*Paul Fieldhouse, MYC '83, MSO Asst. Training Foreman, helping supervise '98 Rookies at Missoula, Spring of 1998.*



*Winthrop Rookie John Spencer preparing to land at the Nine Mile area west of Missoula.*



*Everett "Kalisha" Weniger, MSO '80, Missoula Training Foreman, supervising training at Nine Mile.*



*Keith Wolferman MSO '91, after landing during refresher training at Nine Mile west of Missoula.*



*Left to right: Veteran Forest Service Pilots Eldon Hatch; and Dick Hulla, MSO '75/96, and jumper pilot since '92, at the controls of the Missoula DC-3 C, N115Z. Both are fully qualified F.S. pilots and alternate between the left and right seats.*



*Left to Right: Boise Spotter Jim Kitchen, FBX '88, and Nels Jensen, Jumper Pilot and MSO '62, departing from Boise's Twin Otter, which was under contract from Leading Edge Aviation of Missoula.*

**THE 1998 FIRE SEASON CONTINUED.** This is a continuation of jumpers and pilots from the various bases as they trained, jumped and flew out of Region 1 during 1998.

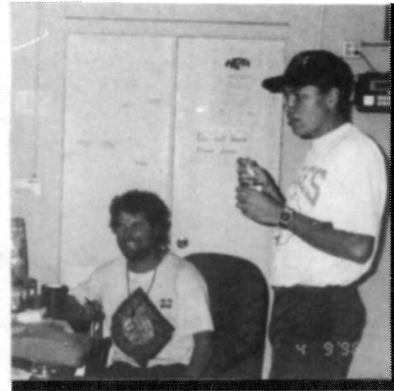
*Continued from page 14.*



*J.P. Zavalla, MSO '95, heading out for a fire jump.*



*Charley Brown, FBX '88, heading for the jump ship. He suffered a bruised heel on that fire jump.*



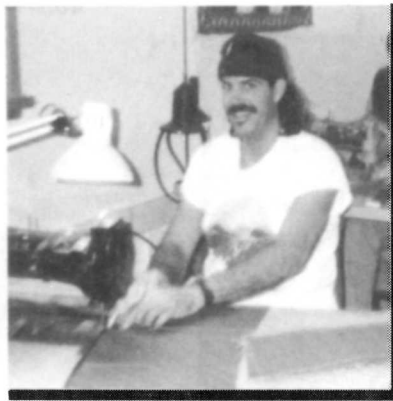
*Left to Right: McCall Jumpers Francis Russo, MYC '92; and Brad Sawyer, MYC '98, at Missoula.*



*Missoula Operations Foreman, Jim Linville, MSO '69, had just lost a ping-pong game as your Editor walked by.*



*Todd Onken, MSO '82, Missoula Base Asst. Loadmaster Foreman, after landing in the Nine Mile area on a refresher jump.*



*Mike "Gizmo" Waldron, MSO '88, busy repairing equipment at the Missoula Base. Gizmo had spent most of the summer of '98 helping supervise Helitack (Helicopter Fire Attack) operations.*



*Joe "Joe Death" Chandler, MSO '71, checking wind velocity for practice jumps. Joe is a Missoula Squad Leader.*



*Jeff Kinderman, MSO '75, Missoula Base Loft Foreman, checking an emergency chute.*



*Left to Right: Alaska Jumpers Dalan Romero, Fairbanks Base Manager, FBX '83; John Dibert, FBX '97; and Dave Bloemker, FBX '97, preparing for a fire jump out of Missoula. They were part of a booster crew.*



*Left to Right: Boise Jumper Martin "Marty" Adell, Boise '95; and Rick Russell, Alaska Jumper, FBX '77, heading out for a fire jump from the Missoula Base.*

*Continued on page 16.*

**THE 1998 FIRE SEASON CONTINUED.** This is a continuation of jumpers and pilots as they jumped, trained and flew out of Region 1 during the 1998 fire season.

*Continued from page 15.*



*James Francis, MSO '88, suited up and heading for the jump ship.*



*Bob Bente, RDD '88, catching up on paperwork at the Missoula base. He was part of a Redding, California booster crew.*



*Redding Jumpers Matt Alexander, RDD '97; and Shannon Orr, RDD '92, with filled water containers for forthcoming fires.*



*Brad Sauer, GAC '91, West Yellowstone Jumper and Squad Leader, was part of a booster crew. He is heading for the jump ship.*



*Russian Smokejumper Victor Ponomarjev jumped with McCall Jumpers in '98. He was part of a McCall booster crew sent to Missoula.*



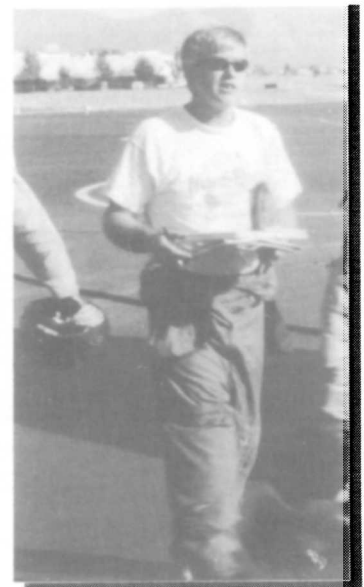
*Left to Right: Boise Jumpers Eric Hipke, NCSB '90, and Jason Hofman, Boise, '88, Boise Spotter, leaving a Bighorn Aviation Casa jump ship.*



*Missoula Base Manager Dave Custer, MSO '70, departing from Bighorn Aviation's Casa jump ship. (Bighorn Aviation is based at Buffalo, Wyoming. The Casa is a Spanish design.)*

*Andy Hayes MSO, '79, heading for jump ship DC-3 C, N115Z, to spot jumpers on fires during the summer of '98.*

*Andy is a Missoula Squad Leader*





**THE 1998 FIRE SEASON CONTINUED.** This is a continuation of jumpers and pilots from the various bases as they trained, jumped and flew out of Region 1 during 1998.

*Continued from page 16.*



*Scott Belknap, MYC '83, and now an MSO Jumper, heading out on another fire.*



*A Boise Booster Jumper crew had just arrived from the Boise base on a BLM Sherpa aircraft and were being briefed about the Missoula DC-3 C jump ship.*



*Ernest "Rudy" Trujilio, MSO '82, a Missoula Squad Leader, thinking over the situation.*



*Jim Beck, MSO '75, Missoula Asst. Loft Foreman, checking a video on chute designs.*



*Ken Wabaunsee, MSO '86, Missoula Loadmaster Foreman, ready for a fire jump, Sept. 1998. Rich Garcia, MSO '91, is walking behind him.*



*Tom McGrath, (Wild Tom), MSO '57, drove up from Nacogdoches, Texas to lend a hand with ground support for the jumpers during the summer of '98. Notice Tom's wide grin at being able to help out and escape the Texas heat. Sometimes he flies to Missoula in his own aircraft.*



*John Kovalicky, MSO '88, moving towards DC-3 C, N115Z, for another fire jump. John's dad is Tom Kovalicky, MSO '61, a member of N.S.A.'s Board of Directors.*

# GRANGEVILLE BASE, SUMMER OF 1998



*Jerry Zumalt, RDD '70, Grangeville, Base Manager, standing in front of a Twin Otter, which was under contract from the ERA Corporation of Anchorage, Alaska in 1998.*

Pictures were taken by Jack Demmons  
June, 1998

The Grangeville, Idaho base was established for the first time in 1951—as a Missoula Spike, or Sub-Base. At that time Grangeville was a wild and woolly area. Ten jumpers were assigned there on a part-time basis that year. (Your Editor was one of them.) Grangeville became a separate Region 1 jumper base in 1972. Refresher and rookie training normally take place in Missoula.

Grangeville had 28 jumpers in 1998. Five were rookies.

There will be more about the Grangeville base in future newsletters.



*Display outside the Grangeville base supply cache*



*A view of the Grangeville base looking to the northwest. Grangeville is 3,900' above sea level.*



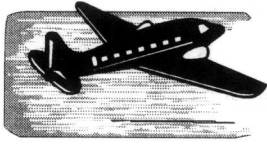
*A view of the outdoor exercise equipment area at the Grangeville base.*



*The base's unique way of protecting bikes.*



*Another view of the base looking north. ERA's Twin Otter is in the background. The supply cache is at the right.*



## WHO IS THAT MASKED MAN?

By Art Jukkala, MSO '56 and Don Courtney MSO '56,  
Static Line Advisors

In the last issue of the Static Line we introduced a new section called "Do You Know Or Did You Know". So let's try another one on you.

The National Smokejumper Association was chartered in 1993 and a newsletter, later to be named the Static Line, became the primary vehicle for keeping members in touch with one another and with organization activities. One dedicated, industrious member has virtually single-handedly produced the Static Line each quarter. To do this, he works in a cramped aircraft hanger office that is boiling hot in summer and so frosty in winter that the Association computer has to be jump-started with a hair drier.

He usually works about 60 hours a week on a graveyard shift schedule, typically opening the office at 1:00 p.m. seven days a week and working until 11:00 p.m. or midnight. To produce Static Line he does everything: researching, gathering and writing stories; collecting and taking photographs; producing camera copy on the computer and handling printing details. And with a little help from his friends, he mails each issue of the Static Line out to the membership.

In addition to the newsletter, he answers the telephone, responds to e-mail and fax messages, prepares correspondence, assists in the areas of life memberships, the historical video project, and new and renewal memberships. He also helps conduct tours of displays in the hanger and at times gives talks about the history of smokejumping.

Who is this masked man? Most of our members know that Jack Demmons is the compiler/editor of the Static Line, but they probably haven't had a chance to see how long and hard Jack works. And those of us who HAVE seen it are overdue in informing the rest of the membership. This guy makes the Association function. When you get this newsletter, give Jack a call or drop him a note and thank him. He'll appreciate it.

Jack smokejumped in 1950, '51 and '52 while attending the University of Montana. He graduated from the U of M in 1952 with a degree in business administration and also received a Regular Army Commission in the Infantry. He attended jump school

at Fort Benning, Georgia and was then assigned as a paratrooper with the 82nd Airborne Division—America's Guard of Honor—at Fort Bragg, North Carolina. Jack is also a graduate of the Army Ranger School.

He got to Korea shortly after the theoretical end of the shooting. Jack commanded an Intelligence and Reconnaissance Platoon of the 7th Infantry, 3d Division, tip-toeing through the minefields on night patrols in the demilitarized zone—drawing fire on several occasions and returning fire—and he and his men manned remote observation posts in the "DMZ," an area he said, that has always been a "hellhole" from the time it was first established in the latter part of 1953.

He later taught R.O.T.C. at the University of Montana. Jack doesn't say whether or not this was more dangerous than tip-toeing through the minefields.

After six years of active duty Jack resigned his commission and returned to the U of M where he eventually earned a master's degree in school administration. He was an educator with the Alaska-On-Base Schools for 12 years—at Fort Greely and Fort Richardson. In those days he drove the Alaska Highway 24 times when it

was all gravel. (Jack has stories about those trips.)

In 1974, while in Alaska, he was asked to return to his old elementary school district at Bonner, Montana (his home area) six miles east of Missoula, and take over as superintendent, where he remained for 15 years. He then retired after 29 years in education.

Jack then spent three years as a logging historian, traveling as far as northern Wisconsin, through western Montana and Idaho, on to the west coasts of Washington and Oregon, searching for logging history. (He was once a logger, as was his dad, who had been a life-long riverman from New Brunswick, Canada.)

What NSA has in Jack Demmons is a pioneer smokejumper/old soldier/educator/historian/workaholic, the perfect Jack-Of-All-Trades to keep things humming in that cramped, temperature-challenged office in the back of Hangar 24 at the Missoula County Airport. We're lucky to have him, and we're proud of him. Thanks Jack. You're a great guy.



Left to right: Wayne Williams, MSO '77, Missoula Base Assistant Operations Foreman and Jack Demmons, MSO '50. They are standing next to Missoula's DC-3 C-N115Z.

The idea for this section of the Static Line came from Fred Brauer, MSO '41.

## Do You Know, Or Did You Know?

Note: We will begin publishing names of those individuals referred to in this section of the newsletters in the 23d Newsletter.

We would like you to identify these individuals. Please keep sending stories in too.

1. Some years ago a rookie jumper started wearing a very large, black cowboy hat. At that time he was quite thin. A former jumper, who later became a jumper pilot, told him: "You remind me of a pissant standing under a cabbage leaf." He still wears the same type hat, but has put on a little weight. Who is he?
2. Around 1969 two jumpers on a summer's day were climbing a radio tower, which was very close to a pub where they had "fortified" themselves prior to scaling the high structure. The police were called. The lads on the tower were singing, "My name is Sue. How Do You Do?" The police shouted back: "You had better come down Sue, and sooooooon." The event made news in a local paper. Who were they?
3. At a yearly termination party, jumpers had gathered at a rather unique and expensive "watering hole." During the course of the evening, as the liquor flowed, one of the jumpers managed to leap upwards and grasp a chandelier. "Tarzan," accompanied by loud chimpanzee sounds, was into his fourth swing when he and the chandelier came crashing to the floor. The management was not amused. They did not ask the jumpers to leave, but demanded they leave forthwith, and take their inebriated aerial gymnast with them. Who was he?
4. A smokejumper cowboy managed to ride his horse into a university classroom building. He tried to get his horse to climb the stairs to the second floor, but the horse balked, became rather nervous, and started burping—from the backside. About that time two of the university's flatfeet came loping in through the west entrance of the building. The smokejumper exited—with horse—through the east entrance. They were last seen climbing the mountain behind the university and the jumper was singing, "Don't Fence Me In." Who was that jumper?
5. Only one pilot ever looped one of Bob Johnson's Tri-Motors. Also, this pilot once brought a Tri-Motor in for a landing at Hale Field in Missoula, touching down momentarily in a field by the Casa Loma Club, in the evening, just north of the field, and then bounced the plane across South Avenue onto the dirt strip. You can bet there was excitement in the Johnson Flying Service office over that incident. Many "high-flown" words were tossed about. This pilot, now deceased, had nine wives, and in later years, after retiring as a pilot, always slept with a revolver under his pillow. Who was this pilot?
6. We would like some answers as to which fire in the history of smokejumping had the most jumpers on it—who had jumped on it, not walked in.
7. There was the "Mysterious Case of the Sabotaged Mannikin." The base loft had several dummies on hand, one suited up for a jump and the other dressed in work clothes and equipped with fire-fighting tools. The base manager would escort visitors around so they could observe what smokejumpers looked like, when dressed to jump and when on the fireline. One boiling hot day, somebody scraped up a big gob of melted tar off the ramp and rolled it between his hands until it looked like it belonged in a toilet bowl. When the base manager turned the corner an hour or two later with some of his visiting ladies in tow, he found the fire-fighting dummy with his pants at his ankles, and holding out his hands; the sculpted ramp tar in one and a great wad of toilet paper in the other. The tour was cancelled! Where did this happen and who was responsible?
8. Who was the rookie jumper who hung up in a lonesome pine on his first qualifying jump and refused to come down, claiming the tree for the Confederate States of America?
9. Some years ago a Ford Tri-Motor was flying out of Grangeville, Idaho with jumpers on-board. The jumpers had loaded four watermelons on the ship, and as it cruised above the Lochsa River in the Clearwater N.F., proceeded to bomb the river (in the days before Highway 12 was built through the area). Two of the "bombs" hit the river and the other two went into the timber to the south of the river. Who were the instigators of this "bombing run?" (We understand there were WW II veterans on the plane.)