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IN THE UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
FOR THE DISTRICT OF MONTANA
MISSOULA DIVISION

FOREST SERVICE EMPLOYEES)
FOR ENVIRONMENTAL ETHICS,)
)
Plaintiff,)
)
vs.)
)
UNITED STATES FOREST SERVICE,)
an agency of the U.S. Department)
of Agriculture,)
)
Defendant,)
_____)

Case No: CV-03-165-M-DWM

**DECLARATION OF
STUART WILLIAMS**

Pursuant to 28 U.S.C. § 1746, I declare under penalty of perjury that the following facts are true and correct:

1. My name is Stuart Williams. I am a wildland firefighter and a former member of the Globe hotshot firefighting team. While fighting the Olallie Complex fire in 2001, located in a wilderness area on the Mt. Hood National Forest in Oregon, I took the photographs attached here. These photographs show the results of a fire retardant drop directly into a wilderness lake.

2. The Olallie Complex firefighting was the subject of a contemporaneous news article published by the Arizona Republic, also attached here. In that article, the reporter writes:

They cross the creek mindful of the retardant-covered rocks. "Be careful where you step," calls out Alan Sinclair, a newcomer to the crew, filling Kuce's old job. "This stuff they dropped makes everything slick when it gets wet. It's real snotty."

Dated this 16th day of October, 2007.

/s/ Stuart Williams
STUART WILLIAMS



Globe Hotshot Firefighters Burn Out As Blazes Continue

Provider: The Arizona Republic ()

WRITTEN BY : The Arizona Republic , DATE POSTED: 8/25/01

12:00:00

WARM SPRINGS AGENCY, Ore. - Despite the rain, the smoke still rises from the forest in great clouds.

The trees are blood red, as are the rocks in the creek that the Globe Hotshots step over as they fight one of the many forest fires burning across the American West.

This season, though not as brutal as last year's, has already burned 2.8 million acres. There are now more than 480,000 acres burning west of the Mississippi. And the fire season is barely half over.

July brought intense burning to the Great Basin, including fires outside Yellowstone National Park and Jackson, Wyo. August brought dry lightning over the Pacific Northwest, lightning that sparked the "Olallie" fire Aug. 15.

By Western standards, the Olallie complex of fires is not large, about 2,500 acres.

Tim Koors/The Arizona Republic Army troops participating in Task Force Phoenix Blaze assist with the Virginia Lake Complex fire. The fire has burned more than 70,000 acres on the Colville Indian Reservation. But to date, about \$3.3 million has been spent to fight the fire south and east of Mount Hood. In all, 689 firefighters have been thrown at the blaze, including the 20 Globe Hotshots, who arrived Aug. 16.

Resources are stretched to the limit. Hotshot crews such as Globe, renowned for their ability to get in front of the nastiest fires, have been decimated.

Earlier in the season, it was by raids from other agencies seeking firefighters. Now, it is crew members going back to college. Though some schools, such as Boise State University, allow firefighters to come back later, most firefighter/students do not accept these offers.

Globe has only six people remaining from the 20 who went to the crew's first assignment in Virginia in April. In the past three weeks, it lost four members to college.

This day finds Bill Kuce walking over the springy soil of central-east Oregon, scouting the woods in front of the Globe crew.

Kuce is one of the original 20 and one of two crew managers still with the firefighters. He was the assistant superintendent. Now he is the acting superintendent, the regular "crew supe" having left to attend to personal business.

He walks the woods carefully but at a brisk pace, looking for escape routes should anything happen. He passes old-growth trees, 6 and 7 feet in diameter.

Many of them are stained retardant red. The fire in this area was raging downhill several days before, and fire managers called in a retardant strike from an air tanker. The tanker dropped its load, and it worked. The fire stopped in its tracks.

When Kuce changes sides of the creek, he goes from a burned-out area where the trees are scattered like matchsticks to a lush, dense, living forest.

He directs the crew one-half mile behind him by radio.

"Follow the hand line to the creek, then skirt the black, then go high above the creek," his voice crackles through the radios that his crew members wear on their chests.

Behind him, members of the group do as directed, following a line dug in the dirt by another hotshot crew. They walk along a burned-out area that will give them safety if the fire should blow up despite the rain that falls on necks and runs down backs.

The smoke gets in their eyes and throats as they cross the creek. It is not heavy, but it's constant, something that sits at chest level. They cross the creek mindful of the retardant-covered rocks.

"Be careful where you step," calls out Alan Sinclair, a newcomer to the crew, filling Kuce's old job. "This stuff they dropped makes everything slick when it gets wet. It's real snotty."

The crew crosses and walks along the black at 150 steps a minute. It is an easy, light pace over ground with only a slight rise. Were it not for the rain and the saplings that smack the firefighters in their legs and faces, this would be a pleasant walk.

But there is something else: The Globe Hotshots would rather be out of the rain, fighting a fire that challenges.

The rain that tapped on their tents the night before has given fire managers the chance to "catch up to the fire," as one firefighter put it. But it has also dampened the hotshots' ardor for fighting the fire.

There isn't flame; there isn't enough risk.

"We've all got our fingers crossed we get sent somewhere more exciting," Sinclair says.

Even the food has taken a turn for the worse.

The main course of their bagged lunch, eaten in a drizzle on a hillside, is cream cheese and tortilla sandwiches. No one is happy about it, even though the crew members are tired of the usual ham sandwiches. The hotshots root through their bags for cream-filled cookies and chips. They have been camping out two hours away from base camp for three nights, and that, too, takes its toll on morale. No showers, the "six-day stink" it's called, and no action make for fed-up firefighters.

It is during lunch when the final insult comes.

A voice comes over the radio, a dispatcher reading the weather report.

"Relative humidity is 80 percent, with a very pleasant, light rain from the southwest," she says.

The dispatch causes an immediate reaction from the hotshots, who have spent their lunch trying to avoid saturation.

"Yeah, you know she's probably sitting under a pretty little umbrella," member Brian Bostwick quips.

Then lunch is over and the hotshots return to their bread and butter: scraping the earth down to the mineral soil to deprive the fire of fuel.

But the soil is spongy and ground is hard to win. There are fallen trees so decomposed that when the hotshots cut into them, they shatter into bark piles.

No one talks much. But when they do, it's revealing.

"What are you thinking about?" one asks another during a break from the shoulder- and back-breaking duty of digging line.

The barest of smiles in response.

"Overtime."

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