
BB Smokejumper Oral History Project. This is Beverly Buckner interviewing Bob Morgan, July 9, 1984 at the supervisor’s office for the Bitterroot National Forest in Hamilton, Montana.

BB I'd like to start out by just making sure that I have this correct. You started jumping from 1946 to 1948?

BM Right.

BB Could you give me a little bit of a history, background of your whole Forest Service career.

BM Well I began to work for the Forest Service not really even seasonally just as a fire fighter... pick up fire fighter... in 1939. In 1941 I was a member of what they called the flying squadron which was about 100, 100 and 125 I think, college students from throughout the country. We were stationed at the old CCC camp up Nine Mile. We were trained to fight fire, and that's what we did all summer long. Well, we did a lot of other things too... but I think they had one more year of that program and then it was discontinued.

BB So it went...

BM And then... oh, excuse me...

BB So it went from 1941 to what year?

BM Well that was... it was just a summer... just the summer season in 1941.

BB Oh I see.

BM 1942 I worked on the Kaniksu, old Kaniksu Forest, in north Idaho as a... well everything really, as a lookout and trail crewman, and whatever. Then I was in the service till almost fall of '45, and then they... I signed up for jumping, summer of '46, and that's... well then subsequently... let's see I jumped for three years. The third year, however, I had a crew of jumpers cruising up in the Swan Valley, and so I didn't really jump very much... nobody else did either because there wasn't very many fires. And then I got out of school and spent one summer still... well the summer of '48 I was already out of school and spent a summer with the jumpers and ended up over at Priest Lake country again on a blister rust survey crew. And I had a blister rust survey crew that summer and one other summer and then I became assistant ranger at Sullivan Lake Ranger Station, which was then on the Kaniksu, it's now on the Colville.

BB And what year was that?

BM That would have been, let's see '49... no '50, I'm sorry,
'50. '51 I transferred to Bonner's Ferry as assistant ranger, same forest. '52 I became ranger at Calder Ranger Station headquarterd in St. Mary's, Idaho, '54 I moved to the Palouse District, ah, also on the... on the St. Joe Forest. And from there I went to Kalispell as fire control staff on the Flathead. That was in 1956, and from there I went to Ogden, Utah, Region 4, as training and safety officer for the region. 1963 I went to the Helena Forest in this region as supervisor; I was there for twelve years, and I've been here for ten.

BB So you've had quite a history of Forest Service work then. Could you tell me, were you camped at Camp Menard then?

BM Yeah, for the period that I was jumping, yeah, that was the headquarters.

BB So you were right out of Menard then?

BM Well right in Menard.

BB And did they fly you right out of Hale Field then from Menard?

BM Yes.

BB O.K.

BM We built a... we constructed an airfield up there just a little ways from Menard, I think in '47, '48, but I don't ever remember using it... I don't ever remember flying out of it... now I might have a time or two but... we were stationed at Hale Field.

BB So what got you interest in smokejumping in the beginning?

BM Well I had some friends who were jumpers during the war... some very close friends... and they talked me into it or I asked them, one of the two. Anyway, that's what got me into it, besides the fact that I had kind of wanted to work for the Forest Service anyway, and that sounded like as good a way as any to start.

BB So you, ah, joined the flying squadron out of college. What college was this?

BM Well, I wasn't in college yet.

BB I see.

BM There was a fellow out at the university who was kind of in charge of recruitment for this... and I'll tell you his name in a minute... Jerry... he was a drafting instructor. And I just went to see him two or three times. I was through high school. I was... in fact what I was doing was taking a post-graduate course in high school and some way or other he got me into this flying
squadron even though I really technically wasn't qualified.

BB  Why weren't you technically...?

BM  Because I wasn't old enough.

BB  I see, and what was the age...

BM  ...and I wasn't in college, see they were supposed to have [inaudible]...

BB  I see, and what was the age limit on that?

BM  I think it was 17, men, that was probably 18, and I was 17.

BB  I see, so this was through the University of Montana?

BM  Forestry School. They handled the recruitment... at least the recruitment locally. I don't know nothing about it to know how much they handled.

BB  Why did that last only one summer? Why didn't it last longer?

BM  Well, I think some other things probably partly replaced it. Just about that time the helicopter was coming on... well not that time... but up... there was a period there of about four years where everything was different. But it may have just proven not economic, you know, not worthwhile. I don't know because I wasn't in on any of the administrative decisions.

BB  I see. How many fires did you get to go on that summer?

BM  Oh, gee whiz, I don't know... seven or eight.

BB  So you were semi-busy.

BM  Yeah.

BB  Did you actually jump that summer then?

BM  No, no, no, no that was strictly... the jumpers were stationed right there with us in the same camp but that was only a small group... Earl Cooley and seven or eight of them. I can't name them all even, but I think I could if I had time... I mean to think. Earl Cooley, and Robinson, and Fred Brauer... well you know that information is available somewhere anyway. But... but we got interested... I got interested there too because it was experimental at that time and they did a lot of practicing, you know, right there in camp with us, and that probably influenced me quite a little bit too.

BB  So you got to work with Earl Cooley then. What kind of a man was he to work for?
BM Oh, fine, fine. He... he's... you know, Earl was all business, no messing around. Which is good because, you know, there's a few hazards connected with jumping out of airplanes. No, I really enjoyed working for Earl... and ah... of course I never did work directly for him because I was a couple of notches down, you know... but, ah, no I enjoyed Earl. I still do. I still see him around quite a lot.

BB And you mentioned Fred Brown and a Robins...

BM Fred Brauer.

BB Brauer?

BM Uh huh, B R A U E R. He was in Missoula still. He was kind of one of the cadre, you know, the original ones who trained us after the war.

BB I see. And, ah, a Robinson?

BM A Robinson. And I can't tell you his first name, but he and Earl Cooley jumped on the first fire in Idaho in 1940. And that's... you know, that's available... that information too. You know I have a [opens desk drawers] ah... probably won't be able to find it right quick... but I started in times when I had a little spare time to chronicle just what we're talking about and I might refer to it... although I don't think... you know, those names you can get.

BB So tell me a little bit about when you worked for the Kaniksu and the lookout fire.

BM Well I was a lookout. That's what I doing over there. Was that '41? No, that's '42... wasn't a bad fire year. So I really spent most of my time out maintaining trail, which was quite a thing because I was all by myself. The war had started and it was awful hard to pick up people, so I was mostly by myself, but the ranger would pick up somebody to help me. I remember he had two guys, two... well really just transients, that came up and worked for me. And they were... I was like 18 or so... and here they were in their 40's or something. It was quite an experience because they, first of all they were afraid of the woods, and second they were just deathly afraid of bear. And I was kind of glad when they finally left because I could get more done without them. But that was all in the roadless part of the Selkirks on the east side of Priest Lake. And that was a very interesting summer. Very.

BB Could you tell me a little bit about, ah, how you got into the smokejumping organization out of the service. Did you apply or was it set up through the service?

BM Yeah, I applied.

BB Could you tell me a little bit about your smokejumping
training.

BM Well, it was pretty doggone rigorous training, and, I presume 80 or 90% of the people who signed up that year for the first year had just come out of the service, you know, just finished the war. And so they were in pretty good shape. It was kind of interesting because that kind of gave the camp up there... the surroundings... a military atmosphere, you know, I mean we would not walk anywhere, we would march, you know, and very interesting training also. Of course we trained... fire training. I'd had lots of that. But we had lots more fire training and we jumped our practice jumps out of the Ford... out of the field up behind, ah, well Six Mile, on a field there on Six Mile. And nothing really very extra exciting happened. We kind of got started on fires pretty early that year and we did a lot of haying at the remount also... remount depot. Camp Menard, as you know, is right next to the remount depot. That's quite a history in itself. But we put up the hay at the remount depot, which I had done also when I was up there in that flying squadron camp. And well we did other projects also, but that was probably the main one that we did was taking care of the hay at the remount depot.

BB You say that the training was run kind of like the military?

BM Oh, no, I don't think they intended it to be that way but the people who were there most of them had just come out of the military, so it just kind of evolved that way.

BB Did you enjoy that part of it?

BM I did, ah huh, I did, yeah.

BB Do you think that, ah, the attitude was different for the overall program because of the military attitude, or do you think it made it better?

BM Oh, I think it made it better. I think people were used to organization and discipline and being told what to do and do it... and... my guess is that it made it better. Oh, yeah.

BB Could you tell me a little bit more about the camaraderie between you and your friends during that training era.

BM You mean... you mean the friends that got me in there or just... 

BB The friends that got you in there and...

BM Of course I went in with several friends too. There was kind of a bunch of us that ran around together even way back before the war and I think there was one, two... there was probably about seven of us really that knew each other fairly well. Some of those were already in the program... were already foremen. I think it's pretty close camaraderie, you know,
between... between the whole outfit... they... and you look back upon it, you know, you just about have to be because, you know, you're responsible... partially responsible at least, for somebody all the time, and they you. And you had to be careful, you know, check and make sure... you know [if] things don't go right [it would] probably sting pretty bad.

BB Could you tell me a little bit about you first jump, what it was like?

BM Yeah, I sure can. You mean first jump or first fire jump?

BB Your first... your first jump out of the training.

BM Well, you know, I don't really remember too much about that. I remember they... they told you don't look at the ground, look at the horizon, which I did... and it wasn't really... wasn't really a big experience. The stepping out isn't so good, but the rest of it is just great.

BB Could you tell me a little bit then about your first fire jump?

BM Yeah, that was kind of interesting. I can't remember the date but it was in July, 1946, and there was a fire bust, and there was quite a little confusion out there at Hale Field. I remember Pat somebody... Bob Johnson was at the controls of the Ford right by the hanger, and was going to take off and he saw something that he didn't like... I don't know... somebody loading something in an airplane, so he just left the controls of that Ford and ran out the door to chase somebody and the Ford began to move out into the field. And I remember old Cooley was there and he ran up and grabbed the brake and stopped it. But anyway that first jump was over in the West Fork of Moose Creek on the Nez... now it's the Nez Perce Forest. And they dropped us... there was two of us... two man fire and the fire wasn't too [inaudible]. And they dropped us about ten miles from where we were supposed to drop. I don't know if you're familiar with that, but when you... when you're going, you're dispatched, they give you a map and a set of instructions... walk to trail so-and-so and leave your stuff and then walk to so-and-such. And we, like I say, we had no trouble with the fire but we didn't know where we were because the map didn't cover where we actually were. You see we had a map from about seven or eight miles to the west of us. By just kind of studying the terrain a little we got an idea of where we should be going, and so we just went uphill till we found a trail on a ridge and then took the trail out. Come out to a lookout, McConnell Lookout, which was manned, and so we checked in and then we just walked out the next day. We just got a little hungry.

BB Could you tell me about this Mr. Bob Johnson, what exactly did he do?

BM Well Bob Johnson was the head of Johnson Flying Service,
pioneer aviator and, you know, rescues, and quite a famous person really. He passed away I think about a year and a half, two years ago. But he had Johnson Flying Service. Built it up from nothing; it was really a going concern, and, ah, sold out to... well I'm not sure... I think they sold out first to Chrysler.

BB I didn't quite understand what you meant by a "bust." What exactly...

BM Well a fire bust? Whole lots of fires... lightning storm and then fires show up all over the place.

BB So you... everybody was going.

BM Everybody was going and that's why the confusion, and I never did find out what happened to whoever got dropped on the fire we were supposed to go to, but I didn't try very hard either.

BB So how did that feel for that first fire call. Were you pretty excited or were you scared or...?

BM Well I, presume I was scared, but the fire part, you know, didn't bother me, I'd had all kinds of fire before that. I think probably the main concern at the time like that is what you're going to jump into, and in this case, as I recall, we jumped into a nice little grassy ridge and had no problem at all.

BB No difficulty then. Have you ever been in a position where you felt that you were totally in danger?

BM Not... not while I was jumping I don't think.

BB Any fires that blew up or anything like that?

BM Oh, yeah, yeah, but I don't feel... it was no hairbreadth, hairy stuff.

BB You were saying that they pre-map out your fires for you, ah...

BM Well, no, you see they... the way it works for instance, say this forest or this Darby district has a fire, back in the back country somewhere. Then they call our dispatcher here in the forest for jumpers and he relays it to Missoula. In the meantime they give you precise instructions on how to come out, where to leave your gear and what trail, or how to come out so they can pick you up. And that's where the foul up was because the instructions had nothing to do with where we were.

BB And how much gear do you pack as far as food staples then?

BM Well that's changed a lot through the years. I think at that time we had a total... one guy had a total... of 110 pounds. That's suit and parachutes and firepack, and food, and first aid
kit, and whatever else you'd need.

**BB** How long does the food last, or how many days is it supposed to go for?

**BM** Well in those days we were on K rations, and I wish still that I had saved one of those things. You know that's just plain Army... infantry food... and then occasionally we'd... we'd get in there and get something else like they had... they had some sacks also interesting, white sacks, that was just plain smokejumper gear that we would take sometimes.

**BB** You say after this first jump you were pretty hungry, did you run out of food?

**BM** Well, I guess we must of because we... well, I don't think we ran out, but I think we just got low because we were there longer than we intended to be because it took us awhile to find out where we were.

**BB** Did you jump with the same person every time or...?

**BM** No, no.

**BB** You never knew who you were going to be with?

**BM** No. No, I thought always I was going in there with people that I knew well and that we had hiked and hunted and camped around all over. But they... I always, at least for the first few times, would put a person... an experienced person with an inexperienced person, and so it didn't really work out the way that I thought it might, you know.

**BB** Did they... did they have a nickname for you by any chance?

**BM** No.

**BB** Never tagged a nickname. Coming out of the war and going into smokejumping did you feel that, during that time, that they were more trying to get smokejumpers to prove themselves than previous times? You don't feel like that happened with you, that you had to prove that you could do it?

**BM** Oh, well, yeah, everybody had to, yeah, but I don't think it was emphasized then any more than any other time.

**BB** O.K. Also I was wondering, could you explain to me what an average day would be like from the minute you got up in the morning to... to dark or to whenever?

**BM** Yeah. We always started the day with running, calisthenics, and I can't remember for how long, and then we had a definite exercise schedule, and then breakfast, and then off to whatever project you were working on... some in truck, some working Pattee Creek for instance, some would get down to the hay field then. Of
course we had a lot of project work too where after the training was over we were stationed here or there and elsewhere doing... building fences, doing anything... doing all kinds of things. Which was very interesting and I think really good for the program because it got the jumpers kind of acquainted at least with some of the field people and vice versa and... and it was a learning experience because we had just very capable overhead, very capable foremen types who... who knew how to do a job and how to do it right. You never forget those kind of things.

BB So you enjoyed the project work then a lot?

BM I did, yeah.

BB What kind of work did you do besides fences and hay?

BM Well there was a lot... a big variety of things. They would send a few into Big Prairie, and exactly what they did I don't know but I'm sure it was the same thing. In those days they raised hay at Big Prairie and they sent a crew in there to cut the hay and put it up. I remember one late... one season I was on a crew building bridges up, ah, Spotted Bear, two bridges on both creeks just south of... no just north of Spotted Bear. I remember a project... we were always doing something out at Hale Field with filling in holes or doing something... and we were assigned a dump truck, four or five of us, to haul gravel in to... to I can't remember exactly what we did with it or where we put it. But again it was Fred Brauer, and he would time us, you know, from the time we left with the empty truck till we come back. And we were out at the fair grounds getting this gravel in a stockpile there, and it just happened that the county had a... the idea was to shovel, you know, and stay in shape... the county had a shovel out there, I mean a power shovel, and so we would drive up and in about three scoops he would load that dump truck and we would beat it back, and I don't think Brauer ever did figure out how we filled that truck. [laughs]

BB So could you tell me a little bit about what you consider the biggest fire that you jumped on, and name a buddy that you jumped with?

BM Well let's see, yeah, I think probably the biggest fire that I jumped on was down on the Boise Forest, and Tommy Roberts was with me, there was two or three others that I knew quite well. There was a lot of us jumped, I think probably two or three Doug... probably three Doug loads. We fiddled around on the edge of that fire for a day, a day and a half, or something... and really didn't do too much except kind of control along one side of it. We got all kinds of credit in the paper for stopping the fire, you know, which we... we probably contributed but we didn't do that much. And then that was kind of interesting because that one crew that I was with they forgot an overhead, so I ended up, I was squad boss at that time, so I ended up in charge of the crew. Well they took us to Boise for overnight and it was a brand new Owyhee Hotel that just opened, in fact I think that was
the opening night. Of course we had clean clothes with us but we didn't have nice clothes, and they were really watched us close. They were just afraid a bunch of jumpers, you know, would cause all kinds of trouble. They didn't have a bit of trouble.

BB So do jumpers usually have a pretty bad reputation then?

BM They didn't then, and I don't think they really do now. But then, you know, that's something different coming into a community. People I'm sure were a little... a little apprehensive.

BB You mentioned Tommy Roberts. Was he a friend of yours?

BM Yep. He was a friend of mine for a good many years. We went to school together, went to college together, and went to the Army together. He's now, I believe he's a doctor. And I've lost track of him; it's been 35 years since I've seen him.

BB So this... what class of fire was this fire... that...?

BM Oh, that would be a big one, I imagine it was a couple, three thousand acres.

BB How many jumpers went on that?

BM I think probably 75, but I'm not sure on that.

BB Did you get to jump on the Mann Gulch fire by any chance?

BM No, but a lot of my friends did.

BB A lot of your friends did. Do you have any, ah, knowledge of what happened there or have any feelings about that fire... what happened?

BM Well, you know, all I know about it is what people have told me or what I've read. I was especially interested in it because at that time of the Mann Gulch fire see, I wasn't jumping any more. I was over in the Kaniksu and we had a group of jumpers come in. I can't remember whether they came in off a fire or came in to go to a fire. But anyway they showed up at my house there, and they knew of the tragedy. Two of the people in that crew had brothers in the program, and of course they were very interested to find out what happened. So I did manage to get the fire control officer for the forest, Hi Lyman, to make an inquiry, whatever he could make, to see whether, you know, whether they should be worried or not. But then I, you know, later on I became supervisor of that forest, so I found out quite a lot about what happened at the Mann Gulch Fire.

BB What... what exactly did happen?

BM Well, it was a bad afternoon at [?]... and I'm not sure the size of it. I think that probably it was... it was probably 50,
60 acres. Anyway it was spreading faster than anyone had imagined that it would. The jumpers dropped... ah, I'll tell you the name of the fellow in charge in a minute... but anyway they dropped and had no problem at all, got their gear going and were heading for the fire, and it just took off... just exploded... and they, they just couldn't outrun it. Wag Dodge was the foreman. Now I can't remember exact numbers but Wag got to an open place, the fire was coming fast, and they got to a... to a park. And Wag told them to... they burned the park out... told them to stay there and lay down and do whatever. And, well, he and I think two others did and the rest... the rest just took off and tried to beat the fire over the ridge, and they never made it.

BB What kind of man was Wag Dodge?

BM Well he was just an outstanding individual, you know, he was one of the... my favorite people in the jumper organization, and I always liked to work with him; I liked to be around him. Unfortunately Wag, he... this really hurt him because, ah, naturally some people would blame him for not having control. And Wag went downhill after that, you know, he, he....

BB So he was the kind of man you really enjoyed working for?

BM You bet.

BB How many jumpers went in on that fire?

BM You know I... I really can't tell you. There must have been like sixteen or so because thirteen of them were... were killed in the fire. I'm trying to figure out how ah, how the airplanes we had at that time... oh, no it was probably a Doug... was probably sixteen or seventeen.

BB How do you feel about this whole tragedy? Do you feel that it could have been avoided? How does it make you feel?

BM Well, it surely didn't make me feel very good then; it doesn't make me feel very good now either because when you loose somebody like that, you know... But I would never try to venture to say it could have been avoided, you know, if you're... well, they could have stayed home. But you know, there's risks connected, and I... the only I think about that is that... I surely don't blame the foreman for it, because you don't, you know, nobody knows how somebody's going to react at a time like that.

BB Did you ever have any of your fires blow like that.

BM Oh, not... I'm sure not that bad. I had lots of them blow out but there was nothing you couldn't get... you know, outrun easy or step aside or something.

BB So you actually did have maybe one that you had to do a little maneuvering to get away from?
BM Oh, yeah, um huh, yeah, probably more than one, and, ah, it is kind of hard to separate those days, jumping days, with subsequent times, you know. But yeah, I've had people pretty badly burned on fires a couple of times.

BB Did you ever have any involvement with any rescue missions?

BM Yeah, I did, yeah. Well, let's see, I guess a couple of times. The most memorable one happened right here on the Bitterroot. It was after the fire season was over and we were back... I know I was back in school... I don't know where the rest of them were. And they just came around and recruited a bunch of us, I don't know how many, eight, nine, to go. A fellow right back here in the brushy forest over in the Idaho side had a heart attack or reportedly had a heart attack, and so they got us together and we took off to go jump and pack him out. And we were going just over the divide and one of the Ford engines gave out. So we had to turn around and come back here to Hamilton and they flew another one down. So we took another one and we routinely jumped on this... at this little camp these people had. And it happened the guy was all right and he didn't have any heart attack, at least he didn't think he did. Which is a good thing because there wasn't enough of us to pack him out over that... over that trail. Anyway, while we there and before we left... and I can't remember what the communication was... another guy in another hunting camp, (this was hunting season, these people were all over there hunting elk,) in another camp, ah, some way or other fell off his horse and stuck a... stuck a stick right through his jaw, right through... I mean it went through. And so we tended him and he seemed to be O.K. and so we hiked out. I don't know how long this took, I imagine two, three days. And then we no more than got out, well got out and went back to Missoula, and this guy that didn't have the heart attack his partner died, his partner had a heart attack and died. Just real... just really strange. And, ah, I think that's really the only real rescue mission that I had. I can't think of any others.

BB Do you feel that that was a... the rescue part is an important part of the smokejumping?

BM Oh, yeah, oh, yeah, oh, yeah. Well, of course, it was much more important then than it is now because we've had, you know, a real good operational corps of helicopters. Now we do a lot of things that we couldn't do then.

BB Do you feel that you could still get into areas better than some helicopters though a bit?

BM Oh, yeah, oh, yeah. There's some places where, you know, you just can't go with helicopters. Some places where you wouldn't want to take a helicopter.

BB How much time is involved as far as if you were going to
take off from Hamilton out here and get over the Bitterroots to rescue someone, maybe with a coronary?

BM Well, you mean then or now?

BB Then, then.

BM Well I suppose... that Ford and that was the primary airplane they used, the Tri-motor, it didn't go very fast so you're talking about a half an hour to get over the top from here, from Hamilton. And that's... I think that was about as fast as it... well we had a Travelaire too. Then in 1948 they got some Doug's, some DC3's, or one DC3 or two, I'm not sure how many, which was a lot different, much faster, more maneuverable, also a shock to jump out of. I remember I don't know where I was... I was on a project somewhere and came back to make a practice jump out of the Doug which I had never done before, and they... really I didn't get briefed very well. I didn't realize that the static line was some, I don't know how long or much longer, eight feet longer or something than we used to fly out of the Ford... I don't know how long that is... probably half a second or something longer, you know, that you feel that thing open, and that, that... you know it really scared me because I figured something had gone wrong. And just that much little bit longer, just... you know, before that chute opened.

BB Did, did the... the Doug's as you called them, the DC3's...

BM DC3's, C47 is the military version.

BB Do they carry more jumpers than the Fords?

BM Yeah, they... I think we could get 24 in a Doug. Now I'm not sure of that. Ford was probably eight, eight, ah, with equipment, in fact I think that was the limit on the Ford.

BB What kind of air was inside of one of these planes when you were actually taking off and heading for a fire? Air I mean, well people's atmosphere, how do they feel emotionally, what's the emotion flowing through there?

BM Well, I think, you know, as the program got along, I really don't think it was bad at all. You couldn't... you didn't know for sure because people were joking and so on and so forth, but I don't think there was, you know, a lot of great fear and apprehension and so on. I think the more apprehension was that that Ford would keep going than that we'd have trouble jumping.

BB Um, to get back to Camp Menard a little bit, did, ah, you have any experience with the remount coming out to any of the fires you were on? Say did you... did you ever jump into a fire and then have any of the remount pack in your gear or equipment?

BM Oh, yeah, oh, yeah. I don't remember any packing any gear... packing gear... they may have because you don't... you
know, you don't know that. You leave it set on the trail and you
don't know who picks it up. But generally it was the district
packer who did that. But I've been on fires where we have been
supplied by the remount stock, oh, several times.

BB What's your... what would your average stay be on a fire, do
you think?

BM Well jumping it wouldn't be very long because they... the
idea was to get the fire controlled. If it's a little one you
stay until you put it out so they don't have to run somebody else
in because it's usually in a remote location. But generally two
maybe three days. The idea was to get you back to the base so
you're ready to go again. And somebody else, if there was a
long duration, the district would send somebody in to relieve
you.

BB Did you ever get to jump in the Southwest at all?

BM No.

BB Back to the rescue missions, did you have any doctors that
jumped with you?

BM Well, I... yeah, I never was involved in one of those jumps
but, ah, Dr. Little, [inaudible]... well he's retired now, but he
was a physician in Helena. I can't remember, I think they just
called him a paradoctor, and he was always available to go. And
then in the meantime there was a couple more who I don't recall
because I left the program with Dr. Little in there. I later
became very well acquainted with him in Helena. But there was
several jumps I recall in the... in the Bob Marshall and I can't
recall, I just don't know the year but a gal was shot through
both knees and they sent the doctor plus however many jumpers...
I don't know. This gal's father started and was owner of KGVO
radio in Missoula. I can't think of her name, but she has since
become a correspondent. Last I heard she was in Russia. So they
got her out and she got all right. And I recall one in, well it
was also in the Bob Marshall, right not very far from Big Prairie
where people were hunting and had shot a couple of elk or some
elk and went back to get them and a grizzly bear got them, and
nobody knows for sure whether they shot the grizzly bear or tried
to shoot the grizzly bear or what, but anyway, anyway, ah, the
bear got the guy. But I wasn't, you know, I was there because I
was on the Flathead at the time but I had really nothing to do
with that incident.

BB We were just talking a little bit about rescue missions and
that... was there any time where any jumpers that you were
working with got hurt to the point of having to be moved?

BM Well you know bruised and bumped a little but no, no broken
bones or anything.

BB So you were never hurt then?
BM No, huh uh.

BB That's real good.

BM Well, you know, I never was hurt enough to go get treatment.

BB How about landings? Did you ever have any rough landings? Did you get hung up in any trees or...?

BM Yeah, I had... had one real rough one, and that was on this forest also. That was up Big Creek, way in the back country up there. That was an interesting jump too because that was Earl Cooley dumped us out... it was... I don't know... I think it was an August afternoon, very turbulent, just very turbulent, and we were... we had the Travelaire, which is, you know, the most sensitive to turbulence. Just to jumpers. And, ah, I'll never forget the procedure is to, you put your foot on the step and then when he's ready for you to go he pats you on the back. Well I had my foot on the step and I was waiting for the pat on the back. We were just jumping like a tennis ball, and he noticed I guess my belt was unbuckled... that holds the chute... which wouldn't have been all that serious but... So he knew if he touched me I'd go. So he jumped on me. Flattened me. And he weighed about 200 pounds at that time. And so finally we made another pass and I went out. And wind was just blowing something fierce and I remember... I don't know if you've ever been up Big Creek, but it's just solid granite on either side... and I was just... the chute just was out ahead of me and I was just going down that canyon to beat the devil. In fact I remember looking over the chute and seeing the Bitterroot Valley. And finally I got maneuvered around to where... well also my chute opened upside down which means you don't have the control of the shroud lines. But I was very lucky I went past a thousand acres of rock and settled into a little patch of spruce. And my chute caught on a... well I don't really know what happened... but I fell with my back across a stump shot where a tree had been fallen over, and then, and I remember looking up... waking up... which it knocked me out for awhile. And a piece of that... that shattered wood had gone through my suit. Not, not serious but I... it was bloody and I thought, "my God, what happened to me." But anyway I got recovered and on my feet and, and meantime I saw the plane leave, Earl was on his way out. I had no idea what happened to the other guy because I was about a mile from where... from where he dropped. I finally found him. His name was Saffian he was from Michigan. And he was hung up in a... he was really hung up in a big, big tree and we fiddled around for a long getting him down. And then neither one of us saw where the cargo went. See, they dropped in jumpers and then they came back and dropped the fire tools and the grub and whatever. And neither one of us saw where it went so we spent one night just eating huckleberries and by this time it was too late to try to go to the fire which was way up on a high craig. It was just... it was a good sized bonfire. And so the next day we found one fire pack and tried to get to the fire. Well, we couldn't get to it. We got within
probably 200 feet of it but there was straight down and straight up, just no way we could get across. So we went back down and in the meantime he was hurting pretty badly; he'd hurt his knee and also knocked out his teeth when he jumped, and so he couldn't go anymore. Well the packers showed up, packers Tommy Ford who runs Tom Ford's. And at that time we had decided to go down the trail and try to make another attack on this fire. He showed up with a couple of mules and of course he had ropes and what not. So he, the packer Tommy, and I took his lasso and lariats and drew ourselves up to the fire finally and down and up and got there... probably took us an hour to put the darn thing out and then back down. We had to hang on the ropes in order to get down.

BB Sounds like you had to work kind of hard to get to that fire.

BM Yeah, well, you know, today we wouldn't even bother with something like that.

BB So You... so Saffy got hurt... what's Saffy...?

BM His name was Saffron, I believe it's S A F F R O N, [Saffian] I'm not sure.

BB Saffron. You say he got his front teeth knocked out and his leg was hurt and he...

BM And his knee was hurt.

BB And your... and then you leg was hurt?

BM No my back, but I wasn't hurt that bad.

BB Your back, and you still climbed. And....

BM Well it wasn't a serious thing it was just at the time when I came to, you know, I thought I was half dead, but I wasn't.

BB And Tom Ford, he's still... he was a jumper or he was just a packer.

BM No he was a packer on the Stevensville Ranger District which is where this occurred. And of course they order jumpers they dispatch the packer about the time they figure that, you know, you're ready to come out.

BB Can the plane tell after you jump that you're in trouble or that you're going to get in trouble.

BM Well, yeah, if... if people are awake and can do it. We had signals to tell them everything, whether we're O.K. or whatever, but neither one of us was in shape to tell anybody anything. But the one guy was hanging in a tree and you can't put a... [laughs] you can't put a streamer out on the ground when you're hanging in a tree, and, of course, I was out, I didn't know what was going
What are these streamers about?

Well signals. I think in those days it was just crepe paper... oh, about a 10, 12 foot thing. You put it on the ground and... I can't remember the signals... but we had signals if you're O.K. you put one set of streamers, if you needed help you put another set, and if you're not O.K. you put... I think an L, it was if you had a bad leg and that sort of thing. So it... generally speaking the communication was good, you know, they would never... had any idea you... they never left until they knew you were O.K. But in this case, as I recall, the air just got so bad they had to get out of there.

So the reason you guys got in trouble in the first place was because of the turbulent air?

Yeah, bad air.

Who determines whether you jump out of the plane or not?

The jump master... or rather we used to call them the spotter, (maybe they still do,) which in this case was Earl Cooley... Earl, Earl himself. And as I remember, I guess we were about five days fooling around getting out of there and I remember getting back to the base at Hale Field and he, Earl, said he didn't think he'd ever see me again.

You said, ah... you mentioned the word Travelaire.

That's an airplane. In those days we had the Ford, ah... Ford Tri-motor and the Travelaire, that's the only airplanes we had. Travelaire is a fabric... powerful engine... I don't know what it was built for originally, I think probably to carry four or five passengers, but with gear and stuff as I recall... well I don't think you could get more than two jumpers, possibly four... I'm not sure.

So it's a lot smaller than the Ford.

Oh, yeah.

What kind of parachutes were you using then?

Well, well the parachutes have, through the years, you know, they've developed better, and better, and better. The first couple of times I was there was a what was called an eagle... I mean the first two or three jumps. I think they changed that my first summer, and it was a large canopy... and I can't tell you how large... seems to me like thirty feet, and when you... and when that opened that really jolted you! You didn't have any pilot chute or anything it just... you just pomp you're open.

What kind were you using then, the day that you got hung up?
BM Well it wasn't an eagle, but I just... I can't... I think it's erwin, I think they call it erwin.

BB Is that the one that has slits in it?

BM Um huh, yeah, um huh, this had slits in it.

BB Were you actually hung up in a tree then, when you got knocked out?

BM No, no, I was on the ground; I was strewn over a stump.

BB You hit the ground.

BM Yeah.

BB What's it like getting... did you ever get hung in a tree.

BM Oh, yeah, yeah.

BB How do you get down?

BM Well we have a very careful procedure for getting down. You have a rope, a letdown rope, and you string it through your D rings and whatnot. It's really not very difficult. But I never was hung up high enough so that it was any problem.

BB So you helped your buddy, Saffy, get down then?

BM Yeah.

BB You worked with a lot of vets then?

BM I would imagine that that first year, '46... and I really don't know... but I, I would guess 80% of them were people that just finished the war. See, prior to that, during the war, they had conscientious objectors who apparently did a... just did a real fine job. And there was no longer that program when the war ended; I mean those people were free to go back to whatever they wanted to do. So it was probably 90% brand new and probably that many percent that were... were veterans.

BB So why couldn't the C.O.'s keep working if they had the experience?

BM Oh, I think they could have if they'd wanted to, you know, I don't think that was any problem. It was kind of... it wasn't really a detention thing, but it was the next to that, you know. I don't know all that much about it, but I don't think they were free to leave prior to that.

BB Oh, so they were kind of in jail or kind of like that?

BM Well I don't think it was really that, it was I think they
had an obligation to the program, and when the war was over, of course, then there's no longer any reason to be an objector so logically.... There was probably a few that stayed... I don't really remember.

BB So you didn't work with any... any of them?

BM Ah, not that I know of.

BB There wasn't any 555th still there?

BM 550 what?

BB The 555th, the black corps.

BM Oh, yeah. No, I never worked with them. They were I think disbanded before I got there.

BB You said that the C.O.'s did a good job.

BM Who?

BB The C.O.'s, the conscientious objectors; you had... you heard that they did....

BM Well I just heard because the same... the same overhead, the same foremen and whatnot would have handled them... when I started.

BB And you said Earl Cooley was a... a C.O.?

BM Oh, no, no, no, no, no, Earl was... was one of the original few jumpers back in 1940.

BB So... but he probably....

BM So... so he became, through the years, and I can't remember just what he.... He became in charge of the smokejumper project, and was in charge of it for a long time.

BB So he probably got to work with them though.

BM Oh, yeah.

BB Um, I've got it down that in 1948 there was a lot of floods and not so much fires. Were you still jumping during that time?

BM It was a wet summer.

BB Were you still at Camp Menard?

BM Well we were stationed there still, but, ah, most of the summer of '48... I graduated from college... and so they put me in charge of this crew of cruisers that were kept up at Condon Ranger Station. And we spent a good part of the summer up there
cruising timber. We had a, I don't know, some kind of land exchange going on up there so we had to cruise the timber and that was very interesting.

BB Did you get into any of the flood work where...?

BM I didn't, no, because that's where I was when the flood was going on.

BB Where was the flood work done at, do you know?

BM Well I think it was in a lot of places, and I wouldn't try to tell you because I just don't know that much about it. But I know there was some not far from the camp up at Nine Mile, and some over in the Rock Creek country, or at least east of Missoula. seems to me like some of people were clear over in the bottom of the Gallatin.

BB You were saying that that work you were doing was kind of interesting, what... what did you find interesting about it?

BM Well cruising timber... and I at that time was a squad leader or something so they put me... well also I just finished school and I should know how to cruise... so I was in charge of this. I think we had 24 or 25 jumpers that, you know, some of which didn't even know tree species. And we had two gentlemen, both now retired, in charge of us, overall, you know, training and so on, and these two people, you know, really knew what they were doing. In fact one of them still lives in Missoula. I saw him on the street about a year ago. Bad for names. But anyway he was a character. He couldn't say two words without an obscenity. That kind of a person, and he would yell at me and yell at those kids. The other guy whose name was Bill Iventhol was really in charge of the project. He retired now. He was supervisor of the Colville up until, I don't know, seven or eight years ago. Between the two of them we really had... well we lost kids, you know, because they didn't know... You trained them... they trained us I should say... I didn't train anybody, and in cruising timber in those days you just took the compass and went through the woods on a straight line and turned around and backed off a ways and back on a straight line. And in those days there wasn't much in the way of roads or any improvements in the Swan Valley and we just had kids lost, you know. Come night time and somebody wouldn't show up or somebody else wouldn't show up. And one time I remember there was one, his name was McDonald, he was Charlie McDonald's boy, Ted McDonald. He had a little cocker spaniel pup that... no it wasn't a pup, I guess it was a dog... that he took out with him all the time cruising. And the dog attacked a moose and so Ted spent the night up a tree and we trying to find him.

BB So what kind of recreation would you do up there?

BM You mean in Condon?
BB Yeah.

BM Well I really don't remember. I'm sure horseshoes and probably a little baseball... There was no social life up there... there was nothing at all. But then we were used to that, we didn't have any anywhere.

BB Did you have any experience in training jumpers? Did you ever get into that end of it?

BM Well, yeah, I did. The second year and the third year I remember having to lead the calisthenics and stuff for a period and taking part in the fire training all the time, you know, and the jump training also.

BB What kind of training do they have you do when you're doing fire training?

BM Well, it's a variety of things. Smokechasing, for one thing. In other words learning to know your way around in the woods, get your way around in the woods in order to find a fire and put it out, or in order to get out after you've put out a fire. That takes quite a little bit of it because that's map reading and compass reading and, ah, it's fairly technical. And then, of course, the fire training was just plain old digging the fire line, and hot spotting, and putting the fire out with hand tools. And I can't remember if it was '47... we had... I can't remember if it was five or six, but we had some squads out training, it was kind of a final training where they lit fires and then we waited for awhile and then went and put them out. And once again it was Earl Cooley and I can't remember whether it was five of us... five crews or six... but anyway Earl whipped the fires along... I don't know... noon or some such time, and then at a certain time well we would, you know, move in on them and attack them. Well he lit one too many fires. I don't know if it was five he lit six, if it was six he lit seven. Anyway we were all... got everything pretty well shaped up and about ready to climb into the trucks and go back to camp and somebody noticed a seventh fire and it was going it was really going. So we spent, I can't remember how long, but a good part of the night, you know, controlling that one.

BB So then tell me a little bit more about the jump training; what exactly do you do to practice jumping?

BM Well in those days... and I'm sure that they have improved it, you know, a lot by now... we had a tower, a mock airplane up off the ground. Just a... just a tower, really, with a door in it, and a harness instead of a parachute. Your harness was hooked to a pole up there and you just jumped out, and just let yourself out, and get the jolt... to get used to the jolt... and to look at the horizon, and learn to go when the spotter hits you, and that sort of thing. And after, I don't know how much of that, I do recall that we actually jumped the first week of training that I had. I don't know when during that first week.
And then it just became a matter of... of going up and jumping and all my practice jumps were at Six Mile, right outside of Nine Mile, it was just this side of Nine Mile. And then I think we had one or two timber jumps, you know, before... well to finish up the training and that occurred right there by Six Mile too.

BB So timber jump they drop you right in the timber?

BM Well the idea was to hang you up, yeah, so you, you know, get a little experience with the let down and so on.

BB Is that pretty scary, getting dropped into timber, knowing that you're...?

BM No, no, I don't think so. It's a... my problem with timber is depth perception... or was, because you look down on it and it looks like a whole lot of little trees and then when you get down in amongst them it ain't a whole lot of little trees it's some big trees.

BB Did you get hung up?

BM Yeah, I'm sure that time I did, but not, you know, I think I could, ah... I jumped. I never used... I never once used a let down. I was able to just release and drop to the ground.

BB And the let... the let down ropes are the... the pulley ropes?

BM Well, yeah. I could be mistaken but I don't believe I ever used a let down. You carried a rope and then you had a procedure where you laced this rope around your D rings and parachute and so on, and let yourself down. And I don't think I was ever anywhere where I couldn't just release and drop out, you know. I mean like ten feet above the ground or something.

BB So today what kind of feeling do you get when you see smoke up on the hill?

BM Well, it doesn't really bother me very much. It used to up until a few years ago. It caused some gray hair and loss of sleep, but we... the policy has changed so much that we are able to do things now that policy wouldn't allow us to do a few years ago. And that's come about in about the last ten years probably.

BB What kind of policy?

BM Well, the policy for many, many years was what they call the "ten A.M. policy" which means if you have a fire say this afternoon you commit everything that you need to control it by 10:00 tomorrow morning. And that was very strictly enforced. It's become less, and less, and less through the years, but there was a period where a person could get into trouble awful quick, you know, by not... by not doing the proper thing, whatever that proper thing was. And it... we evolved. We have, of course, the
fire management policy in the wilderness. We've had that for longer than I've been here. I think it started in 1972. Instead of immediate attack and spending a lot of money and so on,... and saving money really isn't the reason for it. The reason for it is to preserve the wilderness character of the area because we've kept fire out of it for so many years that the fuels and the types of timber that we don't want are growing up. And that was kind of the start of it. Well since then we've also developed they have developed a policy... well to complete that, the policy changed enough so if a lightning fire started in a place where it was reasonably safe and where we wanted to accomplish something we'd let it go and let it burn. Not really let it burn... we would monitor and watch it... but maybe herd it here or herd it there or something. And that's been a very beneficial thing. And the other thing that's come out is the escape fire analysis which is instead of... really what it amounts to is instead of destroying all of the resources at a fire that has escaped initial attack, in other words, two, two guys, three guys, pumper or whatever goes to it and they don't get it, I mean the fire continues to burn out of control... then we have what we call escape fire analysis where we analyze it, see what the best, the most economical, and the least environmentally damaging method to control it, or herd it, or whatever. And we've used that several times. The urgency of immediately throwing everything you have at a fire has changed to this sort of thing where you can use a little analysis and common sense, and, ah, there are other benefits to it, but as far as my experience is concerned the benefit is saving money... saving money, saving resources, probably saving a few people.

BB So you think you should have maybe used a little more of that when you were jumping?

BM We did occasionally when I was jumping. I don't think very many people knew it, but, ah, right here I remember spotting jumpers and finding a fire up... I don't know where it was but over there somewhere... way up high on a crag and the dispatcher here in the Bitterroot at that time was Tom Smith. He had me go over and look at it pretty close, you know, to see how big it was or what it was burning in, whether it was liable to spread, and then he very carefully asked me if, you know, if you could see it from Hamilton. I didn't think you could so they didn't do a thing then. But if that had gotten worse, you know, or somebody had seen it, ah, he would have been in trouble.

BB So they used this "let burn" policy just's mainly for...

BM I shouldn't... I shouldn't have called it that. It's fire management policy because it really isn't a let burn, and I'm... I'm the one who said it.

BB The new policy then is that just mainly for wilderness areas or is that for all federal land?

BM No, we have some outside also but it was only for wilderness
for quite a period. And we, ah... let's see in 1979 or 1980, one of those years we... we burned about 15,000 acres. I mean 15,000 acres burned in the wilderness. And it's kind of amazing, you'd think that would be all black but probably 10% of that 15,000 acres was a regeneration burn... I mean really a hot one where you have to regenerate and...

BB Do those kind of fires stay on the ground or they go up?

BM Oh, they crown but probably 10% of them crown. That's crown fires what... what's, you know, blackest.

BB When you were jumping did you get into any crown fires or was it mainly ground fires?

BM Oh, we got ground fires probably half the time.

BB Half... half crown and half on the ground. What kind of person do you think it takes to be a jumper. Do you think there's any kind of... special kind of person?

BM Not too bright that's all.

BB [laughs] Why do you say that?

BM No. I think it, well, I think it takes a person that wants, you know... probably a little adventuresome. You can't be too timid, you know. They have, you know, people down there now been there for years, and years, and years, and I really like to get some of those people on a fire because they really know what they're doing and they're hard workers.

BB How do you feel about the women coming into smokejumping?

BM You know I that there's a... there's too much halloo about that. I think it's just a natural thing, I think they're going to come and the people that are so bitterly opposed to it I just can't understand what they're thinking. In... in, ah, some cases probably a woman, you know, might not have the strength or the stamina or something to do what needs to be done. But I'd say 90% of the time they can be just as good at it; in some cases better.

BB Why do you say that?

BM I think they think more, you know, I think they would be inclined to use their heads more.

BB In a dangerous situation you mean?

BM Well, maybe that or maybe staying out of a dangerous situation. You know most of the harem-scarem that occurs is because somebody just walked into something they shouldn't have... you know, didn't stop and look and think and then... ah, and that is quite important when you're out like that with
absolutely no support to be of service at all if you take care of
yourself. But that's neither here or there. I'm... I think women
in the program is just fine.

BB Did you ever have much contact with, ah, I call them ground
people... people that came into the fires from the ground? Or
were they always there after you?

BM Oh, yeah, yeah, many times they would come in and relieve
us, you know, and sometimes we would be side by side on the fire.
Never caused any problems far as I'm concerned.

BB So the ground crew and the, ah, smokejumpers got along
pretty well? Do you think there was a...?

BM Well I think there was probably a little jealousy there
because the jumpers were, generally speaking a grade higher... a
grade higher in the GS's or whatever it was then. But I don't
recall anything serious coming of it. Well, we had people that
were with us on the fires two or three times who just couldn't
wait until the next season to apply. I don't really think that
was a serious problem; we used to call them ground pounders and
that kind of thing but it wasn't anything serious.

BB So you all got along pretty well then?

BM As far as I know.

BB Um, do you think that, ah, tanker crews could have helped
you out in the day that you jumped? They're all roadless areas.

BM No, because... in those days that's strictly what the
jumpers were used for, you know. Now today, and through the
years they've got crews that they can send by truck or train or,
you know, just fly to an airport and take off from there. But in
those days we really very seldom jumped where you weren't six,
seven, ten miles from the road or something.

BB Did you ever get isolated from everyone else? Or dropped in
the wrong spot or... (besides that one time)... were you ever
left out there? You always found somebody?

BM Well, you know, the procedure in the organization is pretty
well foolproof... you just don't leave anybody out there that's
in trouble or doesn't know where they're at or whatever.

BB So that's probably where the comraderie comes in.

BM I imagine part of it.

BB So you had quite a long Forest Service career and you've
done so many different jobs, what part of your career have you
enjoyed the most do you think?

BM Oh, I think this part right here where I don't lose a lot of
sleep over fires. Things are pretty well settled down here in the Bitterroot, and I've really enjoyed the last few years... I could have retired six years ago and I chose not to yet but one of these days I will. It gets... something happens, I don't like all this.

BB Is there any story you'd like to say or anything you'd like to talk about that I haven't brought up?

BM Well I've told about all the interesting things that have happened to me, you know, during that period.

BB Can you think of any funny stories that you ran across?

BM Well, I told you about Earl... Earl starting one too many fires. There were... there were funny things. I remember I took a crew of a... a Ford load of jumpers up to Glacier Park one time to drop on a fire right below the garden wall... right below the Going to the Sun Highway. Apparently the Park Service had notified the people, (you know, the public visiting) of this and we got there and there must have been a thousand people and a hundred cars or more lined up on that highway to watch us. We were below the highway, you know, circling and jump dropping. And someone, one kid, and I can't remember his name, had gotten away without his helmet and so I wouldn't let him jump without a helmet. And he so wanted to jump, you know, with all those tourists and people and stuff. I wouldn't let him and I don't think he ever spoke to me again he was so mad. But then, you know, I couldn't take a chance like that. There was those kind of things. And then I remember one time we took a crew, started real early in the morning from Hale Field, and we were going to [inaudible] to I think it was in the Payette Forest. I can't remember the details of the fire but, ah, some of the people had been out, you know, late [laughs] partying and so on and that airplane was a mess! Oh, Lord, I'll never forget that. (What are... are you a graduate student or...?)

BB No, huh uh, no. Well no other stories you'd like to tell or anything special you would like to say?

BM No, I really don't think so.

BB Well, that's fine.

BM We used to have some terrific fishing experiences when we were camped up there. We would go down to the river, the Clark Fork River, there down below Huson or between there and Alberton. In those days right after the war you couldn't buy good fishing equipment, you know, you just couldn't buy good fishing line. And I remember... well we lost so many fish by breaking lines... nice big fish and I remember that, ah, we went down there one night and I had about a 30 pound test line which in those days, was about a tenth of an inch thick. And I remember Fred Brauer, and Earl Cooley, and I was out in the middle of the river and got a hold of a fish and he just run on down the river
and broke my brand new line. But in the meantime Brauer had by this time it was dark... Brauer had a fish of some kind on and he was... I don't know, must have had him an hour. We was in about 10. And finally the thing broke his line and got away. There were some monstrous fish in there. But we pretty regularly would go down there and fish in the evening.

BB So that's what you did for recreation then?

BM Yeah, that probably was most of... well, of course, we had everything up there. We had baseball, and volleyball, and about everything you'd want to do because the facilities had been put there for the CCC's, you know, so they had all that stuff.

BB What... what do you mean by CCC's?

BM Civilian Conservation Corps., you know, the CCC's of the '30's.

BB And they were at Camp Menard with you?

BM No, Camp Menard, no... Camp Menard was built for them.

BB Oh, I see.

BM As a... as a CCC camp. And then another camp about three miles up the road where I was in 1941, I can't remember the name of that, but see the CCC program folded up just about that time because the CCCer's all went to war was about what happened. And so that camp was vacant at the end of the war so that's why we were moved into that.

BB I see. You were saying that you couldn't get any good fishing line, how come?

BM Well, you know, it's like everything else right at the end of the war the materials were scarce. You know, you couldn't buy a car... you couldn't by an automobile, you know, you'd put your name in for two years to get a car. And things just plain weren't of good quality, you know, I don't... the whole reason for it I don't know except that well a lot of things were given up for weaponry or for one reason or another... like I can remember the slogan... what is it... "Lucky Strike Green has gone to war"... there was something in the Lucky Strike package that they couldn't no longer have it green because whatever it took it was scarce, it was needed. And toothpaste, you know, you kept your toothpaste container which was made of metal at that time... not some kind of... [inaudible] Those kind of things were scarce and... and the quality of things you bought, most things just wasn't there.

BB So did you ever have trouble with your fire fighting equipment or getting fire fighting equipment?

BM No I don't recall... I don't recall any of that.
BB  Well, it's just about to the end of the tape so....

BM  O.K.

BB  I really appreciate you talking with me and....

BM  No, It been a kind of a pleasure.  So many of those things I'd forgotten, you know.

BB  I'm glad you remembered them and could share them with me. Thank you.

END OF TAPE