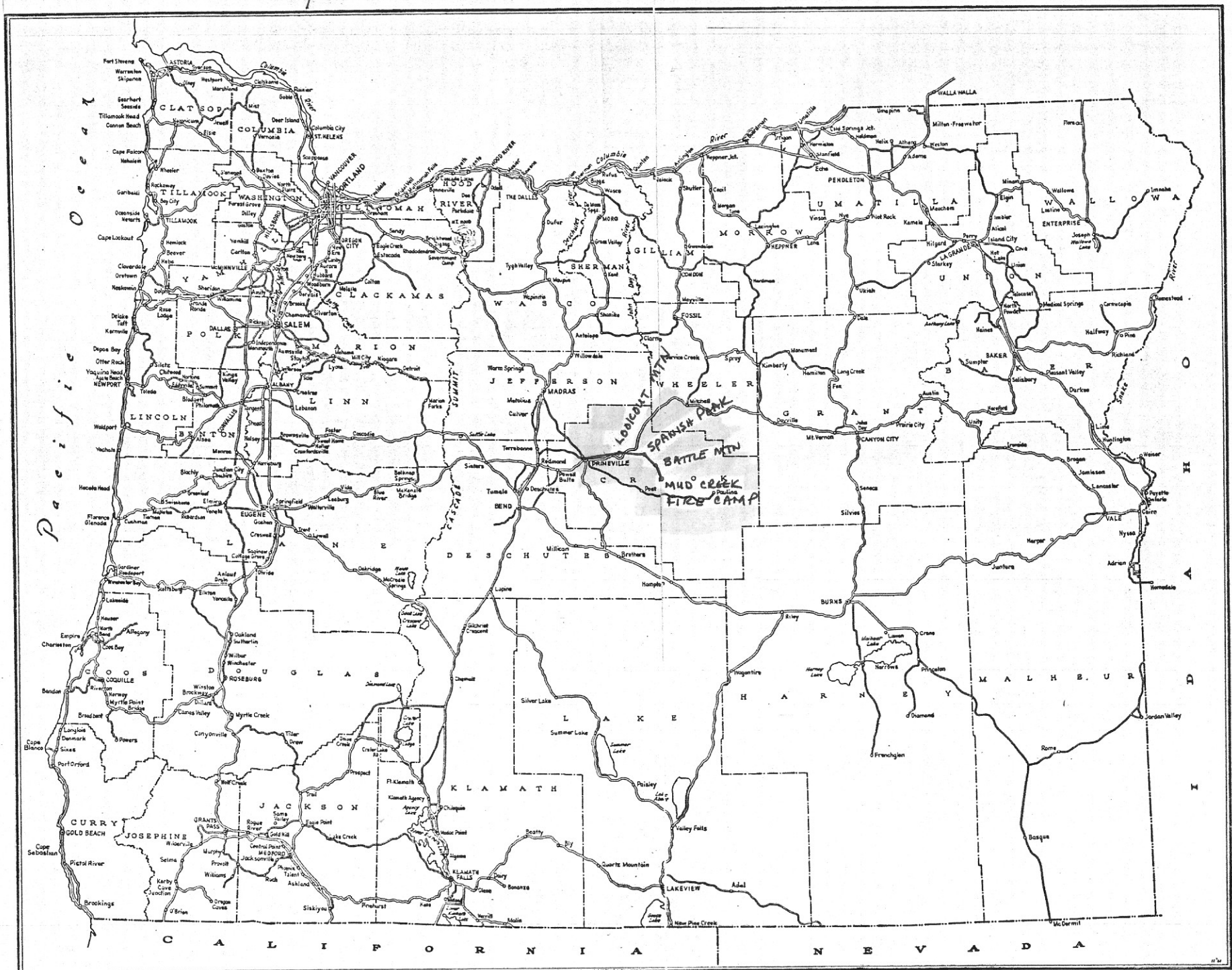


# **YOUNGS BUTTE FIRE 1978**

## **OCHOCO NATIONAL FOREST**

On 9 August 1978 a 3500 acre fire is burning in the Ochoco National Forest east of Prineville. On 12 August the 244th Combat Communications Squadron was called in to set up a communications network for the Youngs Butte Fire. The Communications system was set up from Prineville (Control Point) to Mud Springs Fire Camp with relays at Lookout Mt, Spanish Peak and Battle Creek Mt.

# YOUNGS BUTTE FIRE



244th Cmbt Comm Sq  
Portland IAP, OR 97218

CC

After Action Report - Youngs Butte Fire Ochoco National Forest, 12 Aug-16 Aug 78

Military Department  
State of Oregon  
Attn: AROT  
2150 Fairgrounds Rd N.E.  
Salem, Oregon 97310

# 1. General

a. Youngs Butte Fire, controlled out of Prineville, location of Youngs Butte is about 14 miles SW of Dayville in Grant Co, Oregon.

b. 120900 August 18 thru 161330 August 78

c. 10% of 244th CMBTCS/CMBTCF OreANG

# 2. Operations

## a. Strength

Date	Unit Designation	Service (ARNG/ANG)	Number of Personnel				Status**
			OFF	WO	EM	AGG	
12 Aug 78	244th Cmbt Comm Sq/Flt	ANG	3	0	19	22	State
13 Aug 78	244th Cmbt Comm Sq/Flt	ANG	4	0	19	23	State
14 Aug 78	244th Cmbt Comm Sq/Flt	ANG	2	0	19	21	State
15 Aug 78	244th Cmbt Comm Sq/Flt	ANG	2	0	19	21	State
16 Aug 78	244th Cmbt Comm Sq/Flt	ANG	2	0	19	21	State
			13	0	95	108	

## b. Operations Summary

### (1) Planning/Alert

Received call from Mt. Hood National Forest informing us that the regional office was requesting communications assistance for the Youngs Butte Fire in the Ochoco National Forest. Received approval from the State Military Department in Salem to deploy necessary communications resources from the 244th Cmbt Comm Sq/Flt. Maps were obtained to complete a preliminary survey of the area to determine the best possible site locations. Prepared individual team folders for 2 terminals (TRC-61s) and 3 relays (TRC-36s).

### (2) Execution

The convoy departed PIA at 1230 on 12 Aug 78 after a pre-deployment briefing. They arrived at Prineville at 1700 on the same date. Vehicles were refueled

and departed at 1745, led by Ochoco National Forest Service personnel to the relay sites and the fire camp. The communications system extended from Prineville (Ochoco National Forest HQ) to Mud Springs (fire camp), 66 radio miles or 80 road miles. Seven voice circuits and two telecopying circuits were provided and used extensively by forest service/fire fighting personnel. Communications were fully operational at 0400 on 13 Aug 78, five and one half hours after arrival at the most distant site. The U.S. National Forest Service gave a shut down notice at 1400 on 15 Aug 78.

### (3) Post Operations

The equipment and personnel at the four outlying sites returned to Prineville by 1800 on 15 Aug 1978. The convoy departed Prineville at 0930 on 16 Aug 78 and arrived at PIA 1330. The C-rations consumed were replaced by the U.S. National Forest Service. The fuels consumed, 835 gallons of diesel and 142.8 gallons of mogas, were supplied by OreANG and are subject to reimbursement by the Forest Service. The replacement request has been submitted. Payroll vouchers for 244th personnel have been prepared and submitted.

#### c. Communications: N/A

d. Training: This was a civil disaster rather than a disturbance. This unit had previous experience providing communication for a forest fire by responding to "Happy Fire" in 1977 under a support agreement with the Mt Hood National Forest Services; more specifically, this type of communications deployment is nearly identical with the military mission for which the unit trains on a continuous basis.

### 3. Administration

a. Public Affairs. Major Jimmy W. Hughes, ANG IO Staff Officer was notified.

b. Special Services. None

c. Morale and Discipline. The morale was extremely high. Forty-eight percent of the personnel participating were "weekend" guardsmen. This demonstrates that "weekenders" are available when called upon and can effectively participate in civil emergency activities.

d. Casualties. None

### 4. Logistics (Equipment)

a. Communications provided: TRC 24 System (VHF/UHF Radio Relay), HF CMD and CTL NET, VHF Ground to air network.

#### b. Equipment Utilized

2 Ea AN/TRC-61 Terminal	1 Ea Base Station
3 Ea AN/TRC-36 Relay	8 Ea Portamobile
1 Ea Command Post	2 Ea KWM-2A
1 Ea Fuel Tank Truck M-49A2	10 Ea MB-5 Generator
5 Ea Support Vehicle (Pick-up 4X4)	1 Ea MEP-16 Generator
1 Ea MRC-107 VHF/UHF Air-to-ground jeep	



c. Equipment Lost/Damaged: None

5. Costs (expenditures made by the unit at local level - local purchase: None.

6. Problems:

- a. Personnel: None
- b. Intelligence: None
- c. Operations: None
- d. Organization: None
- e. Training: None
- f. Logistics: None
- g. Communications: None
- h. Material: None
- i. Other: None

7. Lessons Learned: No previous site surveys has been conducted. Selection of sites using contour maps was successful but did not result in optimal communications system. This unit has an agreement with the Mt Hood National Forest under which site surveys have been completed and are on file for emergency reference for the Mt Hood area. Should future agreements, other than Mt Hood, be written between the Oregon Military Department and a US National Forest, the unit given responsibility should order detail maps of that forest and should conduct site surveys, within reason.

8. Recommendations: OreANG Combat Communications units are uniquely qualified for this type of public service since the requirements closely parallel the combat mission. To date, the unit has been able to respond to communication support request without conflict with the federal mission. The 244th Combat Communications Squadron and Flight are extremely proud to have been of service in protecting our Nation's timberlands and are prepared to continue this support whenever called upon to do so.

SIGNED

KEITH E. HALIMARK, Major, OreANG  
Deputy Commander

cy to: ATD/DAG

# Youngs Butte fire mop-up underway

Mop-up operations were being completed this week from a Ochoco National Forest fire that burned nearly 3,500 acres last week.

The fire on federal, state and private lands was officially controlled at 10 a.m. Sunday after burning about 800,000 board feet of timber valued at \$80,000.

Dubbed the Youngs Butte fire, it broke out early Wednesday afternoon about 30 miles west of John Day near the south fork of the John Day River.

Problems developed, according to Ochoco forest information officer Susan O'Dell, because of the steep rocky terrain and because the fire was in the Canyon or Black Canyon roadless area.

Firefighters controlled the blaze, which is believed to be lightning-caused, by dumping fire-retardant chemicals from DC-6 bombers and by using water dumps from helicopters on the western edge.

"Water was used because the bombers can't be that accurate," O'Dell said. "They wanted to make sure the fire was contained on the western flank, which it was."

Also used in the land outside the roadless areas were caterpillar tractors for making fire breaks.

About 650 firefighters worked on the fire, coming from every firefighting district in Oregon and

Washington.

Also used were firefighters from the Carson, Santa Fe and Pike National Forests in New Mexico and Arizona.

Twenty-one men were on hand from the Oregon Air National Guard after initial attempts to set up a communications system failed.

The men from the Combat Communications Squad Unit 244 set a system allowing telephone and teletype communication, with relays at Lookout Mountain, Spanish Peak and Battle Mountain.

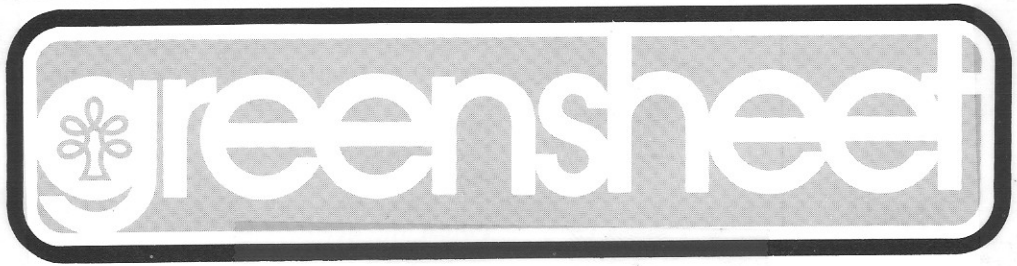
Terminals were set up connecting the Prineville Ranger District office and the Mud Creek fire camp.

Injuries during the fire included three cases of heat exhaustion and a broken foot, all treated at Pioneer Memorial Hospital. Other injured men from state forestry crews were taken to the John Day Hospital.

O'Dell said that contrary to earlier reports, the fire did not break out in a heavily forested areas, but was mainly burning in cheatgrass areas with scattered juniper.

"Really, the amount of timber burned was not very much compared to a fire of this size," she said.

District forestry crews were on hand Monday and Tuesday to look for possible reforestation sites she said.



No. 1742

USDA-Forest Service, Region 6

August 25, 1978

## Rains end season's first fire threat

Perhaps the relief was only temporary, but the rains of August effectively dampened what had become the Northwest's most serious wildfire situation of 1978.

Before the rains came, the Region battled its first two project fires of the year as temperatures broke 100° in some areas. First came the Wigmosta Fire on the Gifford Pinchot NF's Wind River Ranger District. The fire broke out Aug. 9, and was controlled two days later at 248 acres under management of Dale Robinson's overhead Team 2.

Then came the big one of the year so far — the Young's Butte Fire on the Ochoco NF's Paulina RD. It started Aug. 9 and was declared controlled Aug. 13, with assistance from the weather. Total acreage was 3,475, including 2,485 on the Ochoco, and the rest under Oregon State Department of Forestry and Bureau of Land Management protection. Bill Shenk's overhead Team 3 was assigned to the fire.

During the same hot and dry week, the Oregon SDF fought the 3,000-acre Ebel Creek Fire which also blackened 280 acres of Wallowa-Whitman NF land.

In addition, the OSDF quelled its 3,600-acre Grave Creek Fire near Medford, while the Washington State Department of Natural Resources fought the Grays River Fire, controlling it at 1,560 acres in the coastal forest of southwest Washington.

The National Park Service also had its problems, namely the Hoh Lake Fire on the Olympic NP, and four fires in the Sourdough area of the North Cascades NP. The Forest Service provided manpower, overhead, and aircraft support.

Oregon Air National Guardsmen provided valuable communications support to the Forest Service and Oregon SDF on the Young's Butte Fire.

Recalling the support of the 244th Combat Communications Squadron and Flight on a Mt. Hood NF project fire last summer, R-6 Aviation and Fire Management requested the Guard's services for Young's Butte where communications were extremely difficult.

Self-contained with their own vehicles and equipment, the Guard people left Portland Air Base at noon Saturday, Aug. 5, and became operational on the fire that evening. Communications terminals were set up at the Mud Springs Fire Camp and at the Prineville RD, linked by Guard-manned radio relay sites on Battle Creek Mountain, Spanish Peak, and Lookout Mountain.

The Air Guard system provided several channels for direct radio-telephone communication, plus a facsimile capability for transmitting maps, orders, and other written material.

"It was fabulous," Fire Boss Bill Shenk said of the Air Guard support. "We went from no communications, to most anything we wanted. Whenever I get another fire like that, I'm going to request those people again."

.....

CHIEF MITCHELL

WDS

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE  
FOREST SERVICE

Mt. Baker-Snoqualmie National Forest  
1601 Second Avenue Building  
Seattle, Washington 98101

REPLY TO: 5100 Fire Suppression

August 30, 1978

SUBJECT: Young's Butte Fire  
Communications Systems

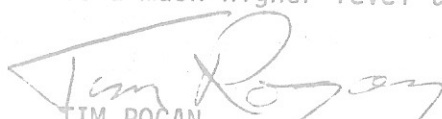
TO: Bill Shenk, R.O. Cooperative Forestry  
Fire Boss  
R-6 Overhead Team #3

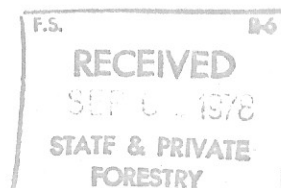


Considering the excellent response and capability of the Oregon Air National Guard Commo Unit, I hope you will do everything possible to develop a regional agreement for both Oregon and Washington.

As you well know, the Forest Service does not have sufficient quantities of long distance (70 miles) commo equipment to connect fire camps to dispatch centers. In one day the Air Guard unit had 12 lines between fire camp and the dispatcher. We even had a dial phone to use to call anywhere. I think the Air Guard unit was a primary factor in our successful demob.

I would hope there is some way to get a regional agreement for both Oregon and Washington. I feel we would be better off utilizing the Air Guard unit than attempting to acquire and maintain our own unit. The knowledge and ability of their technicians is a much higher level than I think we could obtain.

  
TIM ROGAN  
Service Chief





# AIR STOP

VOL 2, No 9

PORTLAND INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT, OREGON

SEPT 1978

## 244th helps fight fire

The 244th CMBTCS answered a call for assistance from the U. S. Forest Service during a recent forest fire on the Youngs Butte area of the Ochoco National Forest East of Prineville.

The fire grew rapidly in the undeveloped, rugged terrain and ultimately destroyed 3,500 acres. The area had no access roads and was not negotiable even by cat vehicles.

Within three and a half hours after assistance was

requested, two terminals, three relays, and a command post departed for the Prineville area. After arrival, communications were fully operational within five and a half hours with seven voice circuits being provided.

More than 48% of the volunteers responding to the call were "weekend" Guardsmen. "The Guardsmen who responded were impressed by the appreciation and help of the citizens in the Prineville area," commented Capt Everett Brown, 244th CCS's Information Officer. "For some of the personnel this was the second time out to provide communications for a forest fire. The 244th provided communications for the Happy Creek fire last year."





## AIR NATIONAL GUARD, PIA— VALUABLE IN FOREST FIRE BATTLES



Portland International Airport and Portland's Air National Guard played key roles in aiding the U.S. Forest Service fight a rash of forest fires that broke out in the Northwest during early August.

Due to its ideal location and the communications system set up between the National Guard and the Forest Service, PIA was used as the command base for the area's fire fighting efforts. Some 2,250 fire fighters from across the country as well as from the local area were flown in to the Air Base where they were housed and fed before being dispatched to fight various blazes.

Emergency communications support for the Forest Service during situations such as this is provided by the Air National Guard's 244th Combat Communications Squadron. Apparently the Forest Service has limited communications resources so they have difficulty maintaining adequate communications between headquar-

ters and the base camps at the fire sights. The 244th responds to these fire emergencies with 100 pieces of sophisticated communications equipment on wheels. They attempt to be at the fire within two to three hours. The equipment is then set on high ground where relay stations for radio beams are established. Several streams of communication can be sent on one beam back to headquarters.

Fire-crews stationed at PIA were sent to fight fires both in Oregon and in Washington over this five-day period. Thousands of acres were lost to these fires, many of which were caused by dry forests that were ignited by lightning from thunderstorms. But the loss could have been even greater without the capabilities provided the Forest Service by PIA and the Air National Guard. According to Pat Kelly, aviation and fire department manager for the Forest Service, "our relationship with the Air National Guard and PIA is invaluable and one of our greatest assets."



# Central Oregonian

MONDAY, AUGUST 14, 1978

PRICE 15c

PRINEVILLE, OREGON

18 PAGES—2 SECTIONS

3,200 Acres Burned—

## Fire Fighters Control Young's Butte Blaze Sunday

The 3,200 acre Young's Butte forest fire which consumed juniper, grass and pine, was controlled by U.S. Forest Service fire fighters Sunday.

The fire, which burned mostly across open juniper and sagebrush country, consumed only about 800,000 board feet of pine, located in canyons of the undulating country in the Black Canyon area, between Rager Ranger Station and the south fork of the John Day

River.

Most of the resource damage was to grasslands, according to Susan O'Dell, Forest Service public information officer.

She said the fire cost a total of \$345,000. Of the total, damage to resources cost \$155,000, and the rest went for manpower, equipment and support.

The fire started Wednesday from what is believed to be a sleeper lightning strike. A thunder

storm passed through the area a few days earlier and lightening may have left a tree or snag smouldering. High temperatures and low humidity caused the smouldering fire to burst into flames and spread rapidly.

The State Forest Department fought the fire along the eastern edge on the south fork of the John Day River and contained their portion of the fire by 8 a.m. Friday. However,

Forest Service personnel, fighting the fire as it advanced toward the Ochoco crest, had a rougher time containing the fire.

On one portion of the front Thursday, weary fire fighters saw the blaze consume three of their hand-etched fire lines. Platoons of fire fighters retreated toward fire camp at the end of their shift Thursday as the fire advanced over ground they had hoped to save.

Earlier they had to

retreat as the fire spotted behind their lines on the rocky ground. Pine scented smoke filled the air, thick and brown where the fire burned most intensely and blue and luminous in the late afternoon sun as it drifted over the park-like hillsides.

Meanwhile, Forest Service DC-7s, and DC-6s dropped over 59,000 gallons of fire retardant on the fire, while the Forest Service was devising its strategy at "fire camp" in Mud Springs

Black Canyon Creek.

The fire did little damage to elk habitat in the area, O'Dell said, and will improve range conditions in the area.

The Forest Service will re-seed their fire lines and the more heavily burned areas, starting Tuesday. The rest of the area will re-seed naturally.

The Forest Service reported four cases of heat exhaustion, one broken leg and a broken foot, among workers during the fire. A

catering service employee was sent to the hospital in John Day after an auto accident.

The 550 Forest Service personnel were fed by a mobile catering service out of Ontario. Dick Bashroford, who runs the catering service, said he could be on the way to the fire within an hour and a half.

The largest fire in the history of the Ochoco National Forest is the 3,500-acre Marks Creek Fire, which burned in July, 1968.



# Firemen subdue 3 Oregon blazes

By The Associated Press

Firefighters helped by drizzly skies controlled a forest fire in Eastern Oregon Sunday and battled rough terrain trying to douse the flames of two other fires.

"The weather has been a very fortunate break," Jim Fisher of the Oregon Forestry Department said in praise of the weekend's moist and cool forecast.

He said the Young's Butte fire 40 miles southwest of John Day, apparently started by lightning, burned 3,475 acres of old-growth pine trees in the Ochoco National Forest before it was contained Saturday afternoon.

Fisher said the Ebell Creek fire, 12 miles southeast of Baker, was controlled Sunday morning after it scorched 1,800 acres on private land owned by Boise Cascade. The blaze was reported Friday afternoon. Its cause has not been determined, although lightning has been ruled out.

In Southern Oregon, the Grave Creek fire was circled by firefighters but not controlled after charring 3,600 acres. The fire started Wednesday about 30 miles north of Grants Pass.

"The weather is favorable and rainy, but it is very rough terrain," Fisher said of the Grave Creek blaze.

In Washington, the Hoh Lake fire on the Olympic Peninsula cooled, and many firefighters got hot food for the first time in days Sunday, a park spokesman said.

The fire remained stable at about 1,100 acres.

If all goes well and the forest doesn't dry out too quickly, containment is possible within three days, the spokesman said.











## *Young's Butte Fire*

From top left clockwise: Fire fighters found a little dirt in the rocky terrain to throw on a spot fire. Above, hoses and other equipment awaited possible use in the fire camp. Below the fire burned from juniper and grass covered terrain to open grass and pine at higher altitudes. Thursday

afternoon, firefighters retreated after seeing the fire progress against their efforts, meanwhile 420 steaks waited their appetites in fire camp. The fire reached its most awesome moments when crowning in big pine trees.





## *On the Line*

Doug Breck, left, Siskious, Ca., and Dewey Warner, Redmond, next from left, and other fire fighters started yet another fire line in the rough rocky soil during the Young's Butte Fire in the Ochoco National Forest. Weary fire fighters had seen the fire jump three of their lines and come

plodding relentlessly up the canyons and draws in the Black Canyon area east of the Rager Ranger Station. The fire consumed 3,200 acres of mostly juniper and grass. The fire will actually enhance forage conditions in the area, Forest Service official spokesmen said. (See Photos, Pg. 6)



# 3,500-acre fire gave 244th 'for real' commo emergency

PRINEVILLE—The 244th Combat Communications Squadron and Flight had an opportunity to practice training "for real" in August, providing communications for the Young's Butte forest fire in the Ochoco National Forest east of Prineville.

The fire consumed more than 3,500 acres of the rugged terrain before it was contained.

Within four hours of the call for help, 21 unit members with three relays, two terminals, and a command post left Portland for the Prineville area. Teams took approximately five hours to complete the communications net at the site, with seven voice circuits in place.

"We have an agreement with the Mt. Hood National Forest; we go out and help when they call," said Major Keith Hallmark. "For the last five years we've been surveying sites around Mt. Hood to see if line of site communications will work, to serve as a prospective fire camp." He pointed to a large map on the wall, dotted with location flags.

"However," he continued, "Ochoco is a long way from Mt. Hood — a completely unfamiliar, unsurveyed area. So when we got the call, we took out some maps and did paperwork profiles on the sites. We selected three—and they worked!"

Senior Master Sergeant Leonard Norby was at the Forest Supervisor's headquarters in Prineville.

"We got super cooperation from the Forest Service," he said. "All we had to do was say we'd like to have something, and they would move Heaven and earth to get it for us."

Norby said the unit was probably most critical to them during the deployment and redeployment phases as a logistics support service.

"We worked about 23 of the first 24 hours," Norby said. "Of the next 24, we worked about 22. We backed off from there," he said, "to only about 20 hours a day."