

Welcome to today's newsletter for families and friends of Australian and New Zealand fire personnel deployed to the USA.

The third deployment to the USA has just been announced today and fire agencies around Australia and New Zealand are nominating firefighters to be part of the next deployment of 20 firefighters leaving Australia next Monday 11 September. USA firefighting resources are still fully committed to the current wildfires. Because of their current high level of commitment and the climate forecast, Tom Frey of NIFC has formally requested additional assistance of Australian and New Zealand firefighters to support ongoing wildland fire suppression efforts.

And the first deployment are nearing the end of their tour in the USA and are heading home around 18 September.

Deployment Summary

	VIC	WA	NSW	ACT	TAS	NZ	Total
1 st Deployment	15	7	11	2	4	11	48 ¹
2 nd Deployment	9	7	13	2	3	10	44
							92

Weather Forecast

There are no predicted season-ending weather events in the foreseeable climate forecast for the western USA where numerous large fires are burning.

Dry thunderstorms are possible in eastern Oregon, the northern Great Basin and western Montana and western Wyoming today. Thunderstorms over the southern Great Basin will be generally wet. Cooler and windy weather likely this weekend, especially over Montana, Idaho and the Pacific Northwest. Warmer and drier weather will return next week

Current fire situation

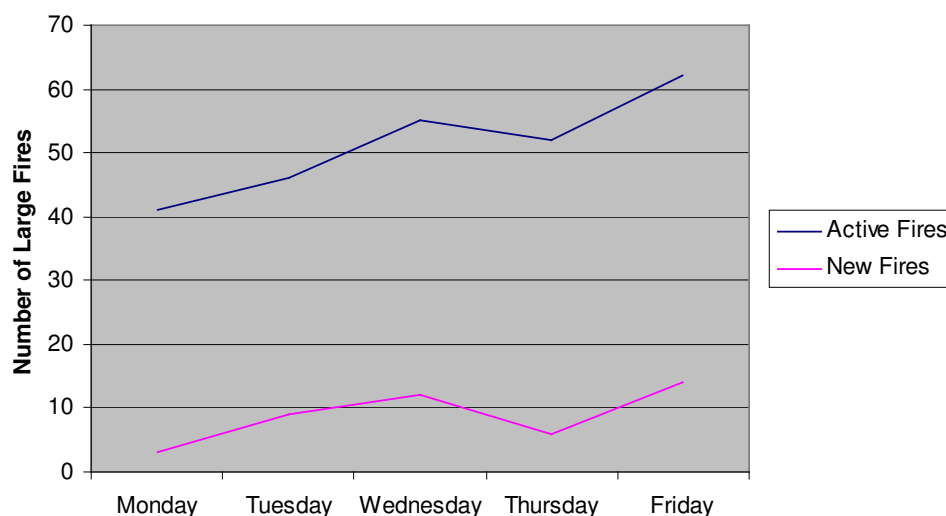
As at 7 September 2006 (USA evening) - 8 September (Melbourne time)

With 62 large fires still burning across the country, USA wildfire agencies are still at Preparedness Level 5, the highest level they have.

139 new fires were reported since yesterday, including fourteen new large fires; one each in Washington, Utah, California, Montana, Oklahoma, and Texas, two in Nevada, three each in Idaho and Oregon. Firefighters contained four large fires yesterday, two in Nevada and one each in Oregon and Hawaii.

US Date	US Time	No. active, large fires	New large fires	Large fires not under control (Acres)	Large fires not under control (Hectares)	Total Acres burnt this season	Total Hectares burnt this season
07-Sep-06	1630	62	14	1,031,090	417,267	8,477,824	3,430,854





The number of active large fires in the USA during the week of 4 – 8 September 2006.

Stories from the Fireline

In requesting a third deployment of ANZ firefighters, Tom Frey of NIFC in Boise Idaho, made a point of mentioning the appreciation of the National Multi-Agency Coordination (MAC) Group in the USA and the agencies they represent for the fire suppression personnel that Australia and New Zealand have provided so far during their record setting fire season.

The MAC Group have "heard nothing but positive feedback" about the efforts of ANZ personnel on the firelines and those managing USA air assets.

Greg Harry (Vic) reporting today from the Red Mountain fire in Idaho said that the camp was called to briefing this morning by the echoing sounds of Waltzing Matilda in honour of the work being done by the ANZ crew. The Governor of Idaho will be visiting the camp on Friday to thank firefighters for their efforts.

A blow out yesterday increased the Red Mountain fire size to 26,000 acres. Crews will be working today to secure what edges they can. A new Incident Management Team will be in place on Saturday.

Tim Shepard (NZ) and Brian Taylor (NZ) arrived back in from their spike camp. They weren't doing it as tough as Greg thought as they stayed in a ranch with real beds! They have seen some interesting country and worked with a variety of crew including some hotshots (highly trained fire crews mainly used to build firelines by hand).

For the first time all the ANZ contingent deployed to Red Mountain were in camp at the one time so there has been a lot of catching up and swapping of stories.

All the ANZ crew here are doing fine and are in great spirits but all are counting the days until their first R&R.



The day before, Greg met up with Trevor Tidey (NZ) and Mark Read (WA) at their helibase that morning. Tim and Brian were still 'socked in' (due to low visibility). Both were well but "in need of a shower & coffee".

Greg Harry also included a report on the Rattlesnake fire.

Situation- temp 88°F, relative humidity 17%, wind 6mph gusting to 12mph with some thunder & lightning. The fire size is 30,210 acres. The camp is smoked in with no aircraft flights. Fire behaviour is moderate but will increase when storm activity commences. At around 4.00pm each day downbursts from the thunderheads make for an interesting time for all fire crew.

Gavin Wornes (WA) is Divisional Supervisor on "A" division and is managing 60 persons. His crew are mopping up and clearing fallen trees of the road. Grant Olson's (WA) crew is preparing a control line ready for a backburn. He has 40 crew that are falling and chipping trees on his line.

Brett Wagstaff (Vic) & John Webster (NZ) are still at a spike camp out at Knox Ranch. Brett & John are managing a crew of 65 and are still mopping up the Summit fire. They are expected in on Saturday.

Julia Visser (NSW) , Garth Toner (NSW) and Russell Perry (NSW) are still up at the Rattlesnake helibase. Even though they are currently socked in they have been doing good work when the opportunity arises. At South Fork, Peter Le Breton (NSW) is continuing to manage the Southfork helibase. Greg spoke with Pete today and he is doing fine. His air base is also socked in so he is a little bored.

Brian Cartelle (NZ) wrote that he caught up with the ANZ firefighters at the Highland Camp this morning. They were all are a bit weary but in good spirits. Paul Devlin (NZ) has taken over Division Papa (known as 'Papa Paul!') - this is apparently a rather complex division to manage but Paul takes the challenge well. Craig Burley (NSW) will take over the November Division in the morning as Division Supervisor, Paul Kale (NZ) is in the Romeo Division as Strike Team crew and Rob Ratcliffe (Tas) is still in the Contingency Group as Task Force Leader. Brian has not caught up with Eddie Tekahika (NZ) yet as he is on a swing shift (half day and half night) and you could say he currently has no fixed abode - although from the fireline feedback, his crew are "having a ball".

Steve De Voogd (Vic) reports from the CASCADE CREST COMPLEX in Oregon that the fire is now 70% contained. The Lake George fire is to be handed back to local management after today, hence ANZ involvement will probably cease on this fire. Another part of the recent spot over was successfully contained by handtrail in steep terrain. This fire is being "plumbed" with pumps and hose today.

Activities: Darryl Burns (Vic) , Ed Hatherley (WA) , Peter Driscoll (Vic) and Peter Bidwell (WA) are working closely with the backburning operation today, linking fireline around the recent spotover to a couple of lakes and scree slopes in the area.

Peter Gibson (WA) and Paul McCoughtry (Vic) are leading crews in the plumbing and blacking out of the fireline constructed yesterday up the steep rise out of Puzzle Creek. Pumps, hose and fittings have been dropped in by sling load from a helicopter half way up the fireline. This section is a key area to hold as the terrain gets steeper both above and beside this fireline.



Alan Daw (WA) is assigned to Initial Attack readiness and also supervision of some rehabilitation works to be done by dozer in an old spike camp location. Alan, Peter Discoll and Peter Bidwell enjoyed a few nights in Spike camp next to a beautiful fast running stream. It is interesting to note that the travel time to the Hoodoo Ski area base camp is little more than 20 mins, and other resources were travelling past this spike camp to Hoodoo. This does however save some time in the morning and allow quicker access to sections of walk in fireline.

Rod Simmonds (WA) and Matt Potter (Vic) are finalising their input into the Lake George fire today before it is handed back to the local District managers. These two have led rehabilitation work programs as well as being designated Initial Attack resources should any new fires start in the vicinity. Steve expects they will assist at the Puzzle fire after today.

Helicopter Management is continuing to provide support to fireground fire fighters. Tasks include firebombing, removal of much of the gear used out on the various spike camps used, sling loads of equipment into sections of fireline and fire reconnaissance. Aerial incendiary work will be needed tomorrow for the burning out operation.

Ian Dicker (NSW) continues as Helibase Manager, with a trainee assigned. Angela Lonergan (NSW), Scott Cashmere (ACT) and Phil Savage (Vic) continue to manage helicopters from the Sisters Helibase.

Future Activities: It sounds like the current Incident Management team is to finish their time in the next few days. Local Forest Managers will probably be looking for our Aussie firefighters to fill roles that will utilise the skills and local knowledge gained on this fire over the past couple of weeks.

Where are ANZ crews?

Crew Locations: First Deployment

Columbia Complex (SE Washington State)	Michael Grant – NZ Kevin Ihaka – NZ John Sutton – NZ Michael Morley – VIC Michael Wright – WA Robert Round-Turner – WA Nicholas McCabe – NZ Neil Cooper – ACT Chris Irvine – TAS Glenn Launt – NSW Russell Manning – VIC John Duggan – TAS Steve de Voogd – VIC David Nugent – VIC Andrew Morrow – VIC	Managed through ANZ liason at Columbia Complex (Walla Walla)
Tripod (Nth Washington State)	Michael Sullivan – NZ Brian Cartelle – NZ Trevor Bullock – NZ Paul Devlin – NZ	



	Edward Te Kahika – NZ Evan Rarere – NZ Julian Armstrong – NSW Terence Auton – VIC Ian Bounds – TAS Craig Burley – NSW Michal Priyjma – NSW Robert Ratcliffe – TAS Wayne Leader – NSW Barry Scott – VIC Mark Williams – NSW Peter Windle – NSW Ashley Frank (leader) – NSW	
Cascade Crest Complex (Oregon)	Scott Cashmere – ACT Peter Driscoll – VIC Ian Dicker – NSW Peter Gibson – WA Alan Daw – WA Rodney Simmonds – WA Matt Potter – VIC Peter Bidwell – WA Paul McCoughtry – VIC Darryl Burns – VIC Ed Hatherley – WA Phillip Savage – VIC Angela Lonergan – NSW	
Heavens Gate Complex (Idaho)	Shane Geerin - NSW	
Paradise Valley Complex, (Montana)	David Vaskess - Vic	
NWCC	Dennis Matthews – VIC	
Deployment finishing	<i>Liam Fogarty – Vic</i> <i>John Barnes – NZ</i>	

Crew Locations: Second Deployment

Tripod Complex	Christopher Banffy – NSW Glenn Burns – NSW Mathew Flynn – NZ Paul Kale – NZ	
Columbia Complex	Anthony Archer – VIC Peter Cecil – VIC Rob Chalwell – VIC Gerald Crawford – TAS Mark Cullen – TAS Barrie Curtis – NSW William Ellis – NZ Phillip Goldberg – NSW Robert Hagan – WA	Liaison



	Phil Hamer – VIC Murray Harrison – NSW Vincent Hilder – WA Thomas Kenneally – WA Stewart Kreltszheim – VIC John McNamara – NSW Trevor Reeves – NSW David Robson – TAS Brian Smith – NSW Hilton Taylor – ACT	
South Fork Complex	Peter Le Breton – NSW	
Red Mountain	Allan Rankin – VIC Mark Read – WA David Ingram – ACT Peter Kearney – NSW Bradley Lett – NZ Graeme McIntyre – NZ Tim Sheppard – NZ Brian Taylor – NZ Rachael Thorp – NZ Trevor Tidey – NZ Greg Harry - Vic	Liaison
Rattlesnake	Grant Olsen – WA Russell Perry – NSW Brett Wagstaff – VIC Gavin Wornes – WA Julia Visser – NSW Garth Toner – NSW John Webster – NZ	
Coordination Centre Boise - NIFC	Andrew Graystone – VIC Roger Armstrong – WA	Liaison

Prepared by Situation Officer Amy Laird, 8 September 2006 (MELBOURNE time)



Large Incidents - September 07, 2006



USA Local News

The second deployment group featured in a news article on TV station KTVB in Idaho. View footage at the following website <http://www.ktvb.com/sharedcontent/VideoPlayer/showVideo.php?vidId=84112>

For up-to-the-minute local news on the US fire situation, including a special mention of the ANZ contingent, check out www.nuggetnews.com

Helpful contacts

- The facts and figures on this newsletter will be updated daily. Family and friends are also encouraged to check the US websites for latest updates
 - www.nifc.gov/fireinfo/nfn.html
 - <http://www.inciweb.org>
- Useful glossaries of USA firefighting terms:
 - <http://inciweb.org/terminology/>
 - <http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/nova/fire/glossary.html#fsto>
- For map of major fires in the US http://activefiresfiremaps.fs.fed.us/lq_fire2.php

TIME ZONES

- Time zones - Australia is approximately 16 hours ahead of the western USA. New Zealand is 18 hours ahead.
- View a map of world time zones at www.worldtimezone.com
- Calculate time in USA relative to your location at www.timeanddate.com/worldclock/converter.html

Western Australia	Eastern Australia Vic, NSW, Tasmania	New Zealand	USA western-most states including Oregon & Washington State	USA Mountain daylight time including Montana & Idaho
8am Friday	10am Friday	12pm Friday	5pm Thursday	6pm Thursday

We will update this newsletter daily with new information.

In the meantime, if you have any concerns or questions please contact:

US Coordination Group (Melbourne)

Phone: 1300 13 4444 (local call cost, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week)

Email: us.coordination@dse.vic.gov.au

