

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

Members of the 1<sup>st</sup> deployment are now settling in back home. The 2<sup>nd</sup> deployment has just come off the fireline. They have completed their final debrief has occurred ahead of their departure from the USA. The 3<sup>rd</sup> Deployment is currently deployed to fires in California and Washington State in north west USA.

**Deployment Summary**

Wildland fire activity was light nationally with 96 new fires reported. Two new large fires were reported in California. Three large fires were contained in California.

**Weather Forecast**

Strong offshore winds will continue in California through Sunday. A high pressure ridge will build over the western states through the weekend. The high pressure ridge will stay through much of next week with warm, dry, and less windy conditions for the West. Weather in Idaho is now fall (autumn) weather, however, weather in California is still fire danger weather.

**Current fire situation**

Large fires are still burning California (7), Washington (5), Idaho (3), Montana (2), Minnesota (1) and Oregon (1).

US Date	US Time	No. active, large fires	New large fires	Large fires not under control (Acres)	Large fires not under control (HA)	Total Acres burnt this season	Total Hectares burnt this season
23-Sep-06	1800	19	0	923,820	373,857	8,956,835	3,624,703

As at 24 September 2006 (USA evening) - 25 September (Melbourne time)

Note: after reassessment of the fire areas, there has been a decrease in the area of large fires not under control from 399,851 ha on Thursday 21/9/06 (Melb) to 373,857 ha on Monday 25/9/06 (Melb). This has also lead to a subsequent decrease in the total hectares burnt this season.

**Stories from the Fireline**

Note: times are US times unless specified otherwise.

**Bob Hagan (WA)** visited the 3<sup>rd</sup> Contingent of ANZ firefighters on the Pigeon Fire at Junction City in California on Friday. Members were all well, and were well regarded by the Team. Bob loaned the Incident Controller, Rich Hawkins (USA), his Aussie flag, and this will be flown at briefings.

There is a real sense of camaraderie between the 3rd contingent members, and they are acting as a consolidated team. Peter Cramer (Vic) is doing a great job as liaison officer in the camp and both US and Aussie firefighters there speak very highly of Peter and his efforts.

The crews have been focused on structure protection and contingency line preparation and the fire has been relatively quiet, although there was a lot of smoke from internal torching and short duration columns yesterday. Alex Moylett (WA) has been spiked out (at remote spike camps) and is apparently going "coyote", but feedback is that he found a nice cabin to stay in.



**Dennis Ward (Vic)** provided an update on Sunday on the Oven Bake Fire - Barr North fire in California. He reports that Paul Whiteley (NSW), David Stackhouse (NZ) and Glenn Harrap (Vic) are working on the north side of the Oven Bake fire in the Barr Complex. The fire line is at altitudes of up to 6,800 feet in places.

Paul, David and Glenn have established 'Camp Australia' at the fire camp at the Petersburg Guard Station. Petersburg is located at a remote but idyllic site in the forest adjacent to a river. The Australian, New Zealand and US flags fly proudly together at the entrance of the Incident Commander's office. The ANZ firefighters are fit, chirpy and well fed with good quality meals being provided in camp. David and Glenn are working on remote sections of line. Glenn recently experienced a Coyote camp (or spike camp), the overnight temperature being rather cold!

Paul has been keen to see a bear. He was walking up a trail the other day and came across a bear footprint. Dennis believes that after seeing the footprint, Paul's desire to see the bear who created it had since diminished.

**Greg Harry (Vic)** gave his final report from both the Red Mountain and Rattlesnake fires in Idaho. The Rattlesnake team demobed Friday night and returned to showers they 'could actually wash in' and a room that they 'could stand up in to get dressed'. The final ANZ team at Red Mountain were doing final jobs, including pulling down tents and cleaning the camp. They returned to Boise on Sunday Morning 24 September for debrief before flying out on Monday night. All have had a memorable time and made many new friends from Australia, New Zealand and America

**Andrew Graystone (Vic)** reports that 41 of the 42 persons in the 2<sup>nd</sup> Contingent have flown/will fly out of Boise to their home ports over the weekend and Monday. Bob Hagan will stay for a short while to provide liaison assistance on the Californian fires. Four members from NSW (Julia Visser, Garth Toner, Russell Perry and Peter Le Breton), departed on Friday and arrived in Sydney on Sunday. Four New Zealanders flew out on Sunday (William Ellis, John Webster, Matthew Flynn and Paul Kale) and will land in Auckland on Tuesday. The remainder of the group fly home Monday, arriving in Sydney and Auckland on Wednesday 27 September.

The Red Mountain crew attended their "close out" dinner with "Paul Boyles" Red Mountain Incident Management Team on Saturday night before returning to Boise on Sunday for debrief before departing for home on Monday.

The 2<sup>nd</sup> Contingent has had a great experience. The contingent indulged in a few restorative ales on returning to Boise on Friday evening and war stories were rife. Andrew reports that the truth never once got in the way of a good story.

Reputations have been made and re-made on this tour of duty. All have stories of great friendships being forged, of memorable fire behaviour, of new ideas. Many have a desire to take the best of what they have seen back to their home jurisdictions and incorporate these ideas to improve the way they manage fires.

Saturday was a lay day for most. A little shopping and sight seeing, some laundry and some well-earned rest. Boise turned on a beautiful day with clear blue sky with a crisp nip in the air and the autumn colours in the trees. Boise hosted a college football game on Saturday night between the



local Boise State Broncos and Oregon State. There was an enormous amount of interest in the game and the town certainly rocked that night.

And of vital importance for crew morale, Andrew Graystone has been doing a fine job keeping the crews updated with the latest AFL and NRL game results.

Paul Kale and Matt Flynn passed through Redding in Northern California on their way back to Boise, Idaho before flying out. They spoke to Dennis Ward (Vic) of the great time they have had on their deployment to the US fires and the experiences, memories and stories they will take home with them.

The remaining members of the contingent will attend debrief workshop on Sunday afternoon. The NIFC staff will farewell them at a dinner at "Café Ole" Sunday night. If it is anything like the Contingent #1 dinner a good time will be had by all.

**Philip McDonald (NZ) & Shane Cross (NZ) in California teaching Glenn Deitz (USA) English (New Zealand style, apparently.....)**



### Where are ANZ crews?

#### **Total number of ANZ Firefighters in USA**

	VIC	WA	NSW	ACT	TAS	NZ	Total
2 <sup>nd</sup> Deployment	9	7	13	2	3	10	44
3 <sup>rd</sup> Deployment	6	3	5		2	8	24
							68

#### **First deployment**

The first deployment arrived home on Monday 18 and Tuesday 19 September.

#### **Second deployment**

Four NSW members of the 2<sup>nd</sup> deployment left the USA on Friday night (US time) and arrived in Sydney on Sunday (Melb time). These were 3 National Parks and Wildlife Service and 1 Rural Fire Service fire fighter. Remaining crew members, except Bob Hagan (WA), are leaving the USA at 5pm on Monday 25 September (US time) and are due to arrive on the morning of Wednesday 27 September (Melb time). This includes 8 Victorians and 3 Tasmanians. Bob Hagan from the 2<sup>nd</sup> deployment will be staying in the US for a short while to provide liaison assistance for the Californian fires.

#### **Second Deployment: Previous Crew Locations (see above for current)**

Location	Fire fighters/liason	
Columbia Complex	Anthony Archer – VIC Peter Cecil – VIC Rob Chalwell – VIC Gerald Crawford – TAS Mark Cullen – TAS	Murray Harrison – NSW Vincent Hilder – WA Thomas Kenneally – WA Stewart Kreltszheim – VIC John McNamara – NSW



	Barrie Curtis – NSW William Ellis – NZ Phillip Goldberg – NSW Robert Hagan – WA Phil Hamer – VIC	Trevor Reeves – NSW David Robson – TAS Brian Smith – NSW Hilton Taylor – ACT
<b>Tripod Complex</b>	Christopher Banffy – NSW	Glenn Burns – NSW
<b>Pigeon (Bar Complex)</b>	Mathew Flynn – NZ	Paul Kale – NZ
<b>Pan Handle Zone</b>	Greg Harry – VIC - Liaison	
<b>Red Mountain</b>	David Ingram – ACT Peter Kearney – NSW Bradley Lett – NZ Graeme McIntyre – NZ Allan Rankin – VIC	Mark Read – WA Tim Sheppard – NZ Brian Taylor – NZ Rachael Thorp – NZ Trevor Tidey – NZ
<b>South Fork Complex</b>	Peter Le Breton – NSW	
<b>Rattlesnake</b>	Grant Olsen – WA Russell Perry – NSW Brett Wagstaff – VIC Gavin Wornes – WA	Julia Visser – NSW Garth Toner – NSW John Webster – NZ
<b>Coordination Centre Boise - NIFC</b>	Andrew Graystone – VIC - Liaison Roger Armstrong – WA	

**Crew Locations: Third Deployment**

<b>Deployment</b>	<b>Fire fighters/liaison</b>	
<b>Northern Operations</b>	Dennis Ward – VIC - Liaison	
<b>Pigeon (Bar Complex)</b>	Bruce Jane – NZ Phillip MacDonald – NZ Shane Cross – NZ David Stackhouse – NZ Russell Gould – WA Ross Williamson – VIC Peter Cramer – VIC Peter McKechnie – NSW	Paul Whiteley – NSW Geoffrey McGill – VIC Glenn Harrap – VIC Alexander Moylett – WA David McMillan – WA Alan McDonough – NSW Darryl Dunbar – NSW
<b>Columbia Complex</b>	Mark Bang – NZ Timothy McNaught – NSW Steven Richardson – VIC	Kenneth Borland – TAS Michael Phillips – TAS
<b>Polallie</b>	Wayne Hamilton – NZ	
<b>Tripod Complex</b>	Douglas Ashford – NZ	Raymond Gardiner – NZ

Prepared by Natasha McLean, 25 September 2006 (MELBOURNE time)

**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](http://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.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](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](http://www.worldtimezone.com)
- Calculate time in USA relative to your location at [www.timeanddate.com/worldclock/converter.html](http://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 today	10am today	12pm today	5pm yesterday	6pm yesterday

***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](mailto:us.coordination@dse.vic.gov.au)



