

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

The 2nd deployment have now all arrived back in Australia and New Zealand, after having flown out of the US over the last several days. The 3rd deployment are still on the fire-line, on their second rotation, and are located at the Pidgeon Bar Complex, Columbia Complex, Polallie and the Tripod Complex.

Deployment Summary

The first deployment returned home on 18 and 19 September.

The second deployment left the US in the past few days and arrived home by this morning, apart from two staff at the Boise NIFC Coordination Centre.

Weather Forecast

A high pressure will build over the western states this week bringing warm, dry, and less windy conditions. A higher Haines index is expected along the West Coast states as well as areas of low humidity. The next weather system will move into the West early next week bringing cooler conditions and a chance of light showers. Precipitation will end on Tuesday in Florida as a dry high pressure moves in early next week.

Current fire situation

Wildland fire activity remains light with 54 new fires. Two new large fires were reported: one each in California and Hawaii. Two large fires were also contained in California and Hawaii. Large fires are also burning in California (4), Idaho (3), Minnesota (1), Montana (1) and Washington (5).

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 Ha burnt this season
26-Sep-06	1730	12	2	867,270	365,525	9,033,694	3,632,887

As at 26 Sep 2006 (US evening) – 27 Sep (Melb morning)

Stories from the Fireline**New Zealanders Managing US Helicopters**

Dennis Ward (Vic) reports that the Weaverville Airbase has been graced with the pleasure of the company of three New Zealand Helicopter managers over the past couple of weeks. This airbase is providing the air support for the Oven Bake and Pigeon fires which make up the Barr Complex in northern California.

Bruce (alias "the Dodge") Janes is managing a Sierra 58 Sikorsky helicopter. Now the origins if the alias "the Dodge" is raising some interest, but I am told we have to let our imaginations take over!

Shane Cross is managing a Bell 212. Shane is continuing his English lessons for the US folk at the airbase and is now introducing a new word for them each day at the morning briefing.



Phillip MacDonald is managing a Bell 207 which has been busy doing recce flights over the fire. Apparently this is a pretty slick ship and is well suited for the recce work.

These helicopters are engaged in recce flights, sling work carrying gear in and out of the fireline, including for coyote / spike camps, crew transport and water bucket drops.

Bruce, Shane and Philip all say that they are learning a lot from their experience. They say that the US helicopter management task is a lot more complicated to what they are used to and this will give them the ability to approach the job back home in a much more lateral way. It is good to hear that as helicopter managers they have all been able to fly the fires !

Ray Gardiner and Doug Ashford are still based at the Gidgie Airbase up at the Tripod fire in Washington on the Canadian border. Although they had been quiet for a while early in their deployment due to the weather constraining flights, it has now cleared and they are now keeping very busy with sling loading gear for recovery work and fire rehabilitation work. They are fit, well and happy, and are very much part of the team at the Gidgie Airbase.



Smoke jumpers loading into aircraft

Where are ANZ crews?

Total Firefighters in USA

	VIC	WA	NSW	ACT	TAS	NZ	Total
3 rd Deployment	6	3	5		2	8	24



Crew Locations: Second Deployment

Location	Fire fighters/liaison	Other information
Coordination Centre Boise - NIFC	Andrew Graystone – VIC Roger Armstrong – WA	Liaison

Crew Locations: Third Deployment

Deployment	Fire fighters/liaison	Other information
Northern Operations	Dennis Ward – VIC	Liaison
Pigeon (Bar Complex)	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	
Columbia Complex	Mark Bang – NZ Timothy McNaught – NSW Steven Richardson – VIC Kenneth Borland – TAS Michael Phillips – TAS	
Polallie	Wayne Hamilton – NZ	
Tripod Complex	Douglas Ashford – NZ Raymond Gardiner – NZ	

Bar Complex (Pidgeon Fire) – California

86,283 acres at 36 percent contained. This complex consists of fires which are located northwest of Weaverville. The complex includes four fires. Structures and power lines are threatened. Structure protection and road closures are in effect.

Columbia Complex (Southeast, Washington Department of Natural Resources):

109,402 acres at 80 percent contained. This complex consists of six fires and is located near Dayton. Road closures are in effect. This will be the last report unless significant information is reported.

Tripod Complex – Washington

This complex is 175,114 acres at 70 percent contained. This complex, consisting of the Spur Peak and Tripod fires, is located seven miles northeast of Winthrop. Smouldering fire activity continued. A closure around the fire area is in effect.



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#fst0>
- 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 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

