

The International Association of Wildland Fire (IAWF) has received notice of the following wildland firefighter fatalities:

Names: Robert Christopher Woodhead

Rank: Pilot

Age: 53

Gender: Male

Status: Wildland Contract

Years of Service: Unknown

Date of Incident: 09/14/2009

Date of Death: 09/14/2009

Supervisors: R. Bruce Holloway, company President and Torrie Chartier, General Manager, Elbow River Helicopters

Incident Description: 1 helicopter pilot died while operating a Bell 212 with a line and bucket while working the nearly 1300 hectare Intipan fire which is believed to have been caused by a lightning strike. The helicopter crashed into the swift current of the Thompson-Fraser River between Lytton and Lillooet, British Columbia, about 260 kilometers northeast of Vancouver. The reason for the crash is unknown at this time. The pilot was reportedly seen swimming in the water immediately after the helicopter crashed by another helicopter pilot who tried to rescue Woodhead by lowering his own bucket. The crash will be investigated by the Transportation Safety Board. The aircraft was owned by Alberta based Elbow River Helicopters. The pilot lived in Stoney Creek, Ontario.

Other 2009 Wildland Fire Fatalities reported outside the US to Date:

Chile (13) – 15 February 2009, 1 helicopter pilot (Eduardo Canala Pecchenino) and 12 firefighters, all males, ages 18 to 25, when the ship crashed into a rugged, fog shrouded hillside near Chanco, in Maule province, approximately 165 miles (270 kilometers) south of Santiago. The helicopter had just retrieved the firefighters from their day's work on the forest fire which was being controlled at the time of the crash (5 PM local time, 2000 GMT). The firefighters worked for Celulosa Arauco y Constitucion, a Chilean timber and pulp company known as CELCO. The fire was burning on property of another timber company, Compania Astilladora de Concepcion, or COMACO, but CELCO had mobilized their firefighters to keep the fire from spreading. The helicopter was owned by Flight Service, a Maule based company. No cause of the crash has been given.

Australia (1) – 17 February 2009, 1 ACT volunteer firefighter from Banks near Canberra, Firefighter David Balfour, male, age 47, 10 years of experience, incident occurred near Cambarville. He was attempting to connect a hose at the rear of the engine when a burnt-out tree fell striking him; another firefighter was also injured in the accident.

New Zealand (1) – 07 April 2009, 1 volunteer fire service firefighter from Willowby, south of Ashburton, Firefighter Barry Keen, male, age 52, 35 years of experience by a falling tree branch. They had been called to extinguish a single burning tree from a previous stubble field burn at around 0430 Hours. The firefighter's had just got out of the fire apparatus and apparently Firefighter Keen walked around the front of the truck and at that stage a branch fell

down and struck him on the head. Firefighter Keen was initially treated at the scene, but died within half an hour of the accident, 04/07/2009.

Turkey (2) – 18 June 2009, a retired Turkish Pilot and Squadron Leader (Commander Tanju Tezgel) and a Turkish Forest Staff member (Ali Ekin) aboard a Ukrainian firefighting helicopter died after it crashed into a reservoir in southwestern Turkey. The helicopter reportedly had taken on water to fight a forest fire, crashed into the Geyik Dam in the Milas region, and then sank. Actual cause of the crash is unknown at this time. The body of Commander Tezgel was recovered the morning of Friday, 19 June by divers from a Turkish rescue team but attempts were still being made to recover the forest staff member. Three Ukrainian pilots or technicians, depending on the report, aboard the same helicopter swam to shore with assistance from nearby citizens.

Spain (4) – 21 July 2009, four GRAF wildland firefighters died and two others were rushed to hospitals with life-threatening burns from an incident in northeastern Spain Tuesday 21 July 2009. The firefighters were reportedly trapped during a change in wind direction which blocked their escape route on an 800 hectare (1975 acres) forest fire in the Els Port National Park near Tarragona in Catalonia. The Horta de Sant Joan fire started on Tuesday 21 July.

Spain (1) – 23 July 2009, one firefighter died when the fire truck he was driving crashed in northeastern Spain.

Spain (1) – 24 July 2009, one of the injured GRAF wildland firefighters from the incident on 21 July died in the hospital from his burns.

If you have information on additional 2009 wildland firefighter fatalities outside the US please pass that information along to wildfire@iawfonline.org .

This message brought to you by the International Association of Wildland Fire (IAWF) wildfire@iawfonline.org and on the web at www.iawfonline.org .

IAWF is a non-profit, professional association representing members of the global wildland fire community. The purpose of the Association is to facilitate communication and provide leadership for the wildland fire community.

Our listserv FireNet is one of the many ways IAWF communicates and discusses wildland fire issues globally.

IAWF also has its official membership publication "Wildfire Magazine" (www.iawfonline.org/magazine.php and www.wildfiremag.com/); and the only peer reviewed scientific publication dedicated to wildland fire research, the "International Journal of Wildland Fire" (www.iawfonline.org/journal.php and www.publish.csiro.au/?nid=114).