

ROMERO FIRE INVESTIGATION REPORT

LOS PADRES NATIONAL FOREST

REGION FIVE

OCTOBER 7, 1971

APPROVED BY:

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The Investigation Team

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Assisted By

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Clemence R. Crouch, Deputy Forest Supervisor  
Los Padres National Forest

Clive M. Countryman, Fire Behavior Specialist

Numerous Witnesses as interviewed

## FOREWORD

This report is the result of an intensive on-the-ground study of the circumstances leading to this tragedy. Specific recommendations are made to reduce the chances of such future losses.

## KILLED IN ACTION IN LINE OF DUTY

1. Cumor, Richard Lee, 26 USFS Employee working as a swamper.
2. DeLoach, Delbert Dale, 26 USFS Employee working as a swamper.
3. Klepperich, Thomas H., 34 USFS Employee working as a tractor boss.
4. Minneau, James Contract bulldozer operator.

## CRITICALLY or SERIOUSLY INJURED IN LINE OF DUTY

1. Hotchkiss, Gerald Contract bulldozer operator.
2. Kaiser, Leonard Contract bulldozer operator.

LIST OF ATTACHMENTS

Attachment  
Number

- ✓ 1. Weather and Fire Behavior Forecast for Fire, Nights of October 7 - 8, 1971.
- ✓ 2. General Area Photograph.
- ✓ 3. Photograph of Bulldozer Location.
4. Final Large Fire Report, October 17, 1971.
- ✓ 5. Organization Chart of Fire on October 7, 1971.
- ✓ 6. Burning Period Boundaries, Romero Fire.
- ✓ 7. Certificate of Death, Richard L. Cumor.
- ✓ 8. Certificate of Death, Thomas H. Klepperich
- ✓ 9. Certificate of Death, Delbert D. DeLoach.
10. Pre-attack Plans.
- ✓ 11. Fire Assignment Sheet, Day of 10/7/71.
- ✓ 12. Fire Assignment Sheet, Night of 10/7/71.
- ✓ 13. Fire Assignment Sheet, Day of 10/8/71.
- ✓ 14. Witness Statements.

## DETAILS SURROUNDING THE ACCIDENT

The Romero fire started at 3:45 p. m. on October 6, 1971, in an area mutually protected by the Forest Service and Santa Barbara County, a "contract county" for the California Division of Forestry. The area of the fire origin is also in a fire district. Because of Initial Attack Agreements, several fire districts were involved in the initial attack. (See Attachment 15.)

The area of the fire where the fatalities occurred was the southern fire edge above the Santa Barbara, Montecito, Summerland, Carpinteria area. The first night's action consisted of picking up the fire edge and a holding action to keep the fire out of the developed ranching and residential areas. This procedure was continued into the daylight hours of October 7 (the day of the tragedy).

During the night and early morning hours of October 7, the California Division of Forestry assumed responsibility for the portion of line where the tragedy occurred. At about 10:00 a. m. on October 7, the Forest Service committed four contract bulldozers to this section of line to work under the CDF through a liaison officer. A team of four Forest Service tractor bosses was assigned to work with the cats under Tom Klepperich. Klepperich reported to Doug Hayden, the Forest Service liaison officer who was coordinating the overall line construction with the CDF. Hayden had a line scout, Robert Nelson, who was working with Klepperich (see Attachment #5 of the Organization).

Klepperich, with the cats and CDF crews and tankers, spent the morning of October 7 building line and firing out. At this time the fire was moving slowly and was being held on the north side of the Camino Cielo firebreak and on the southeasterly edge of the ridge about Point A on Attachment #2. At the NE corner the fire had dropped over into the headwaters of Santa Monica Canyon. This easterly and northeasterly section of line was open but being held more or less static by frequent retardant drops by aircraft.

At about 1500 hours, Doug Campbell, the Day Line Boss, decided to construct an indirect line from Point B on Attachment #2, easterly to the bottom of Santa Monica Canyon (Point D). He believed that retardant drops could keep the fire backing down slowly into the bottom of Santa Monica Canyon, and could be picked up by constructing hand line and burning out from the Canyon bottom. Campbell realized this line had marginal chance for success, but it was the last hope for about 4 miles (see Attachment #10, Pre-attack Plans). This plan was discussed with the Fire Boss, Ben Lyons. Consequently, the 4 tractors, with Klepperich, Cumor, DeLoach, and McMullen, were committed to the construction of this line.

This was the status of the fire action at the time of the evening shift change on the night of October 7, 1971. The cats were not yet tied into Santa Monica Canyon because of terrain and rock, and inadequate time.

The night shift plan indicated that the fireline, presumably constructed into Santa Monica Canyon, would be burned out by CDF hand crews, and that these crews would then start building line up CPS Santa Monica Canyon. (See the Fire Assignment Sheet and the Weather and Fire Behavior Forecast continued in Attachment #12.)

There was a considerable delay in changing shifts. Most of the night shift did not arrive until after dark. The tractors needed refueling, and the CDF hand crews had not been fed when they arrived on the line. The line was not complete and there was some doubt it could be fired at night.

About 1900, night Line Boss Jerry Berry, CDF Division Boss Jack Couste, and night Liaison Officer (with CDF) Ed Masonheimer met at Point B on Attachment #2, to discuss the night shift action.

With downslope winds expected, Couste and Jerry Tipton of the CDF maintained that the line condition was not suitable for a burning-out action, and that hand crews should not be committed to this area. (Attachment #1, 1430, October 7, Forecast; Attachment #12, the 1600 Weather and Fire Behavior Forecast.) Berry and Masonheimer concurred. It was decided to bring the cats out from Point C to Point A, on Attachment #2, for refueling, to feed the night hand crews, and see what happened when the night wind change occurred. (Interview with Jerry Berry.)

Forest Service Officer Doug Hayden, the day Liaison Officer with CDF and the man in charge of the Forest Service action including the cats, was told by Berry to contact Klepperich and to tell him to bring the cats out to Point A for refueling. Hayden called Klepperich and told him of the plan and for him to bring the cats out. Klepperich said he had additional work to do on the line and would start out at 2100. Hayden expressed no urgency to Klepperich at this time, as he did not feel any. (Interviews with Hayden and McMullen.)

Soon after 1930 hours (about an hour after dark), the night, downslope winds began and the fire started to flare up in the head of Santa Monica Canyon. At this time, the fire just North of Point B flared up and CDF tankers were moved over to pick up this hot spot.

This is probably the most critical time, 1930 hours, in the whole chain of events leading up to the accident. These conditions existed:

1. The night overhead and crews (CDF pumpers, hand crews, and FS and CDF overhead) were up on ridge on Point A, Attachment #2, and had not been committed.
2. The tractors under the Inyo Team were manned by a day crew which had not yet been relieved, although a relief crew was standing by. They had been told to come out but had not yet started out. They were extended on an indirect line with gaps and less than adequate safety zones constructed along the way.
3. The Forest Service CDF Liaison Officer and all other personnel with whom the tractor crews had been in contact during the day had been relieved and had started back to camp.
4. The night shift people had arrived either at dusk or after dark and were in the process of trying to assess the situation and determine what action to take.
5. At about this time, communications with Klepperich broke down due to inadequate radio equipment. (From about this time until after the tragedy, several people tried unsuccessfully to reach Klepperich on the radio. This was not a radio failure--it was due to antiquated, inadequate equipment which could not be heard by Klepperich or the tractor crews.)

We must assume that if more effective and positive management action to develop the night strategy had been taken, all men and equipment including the tractor crews would have been assigned to productive, safe tasks much before this accident occurred. A time lag of more than one and one half hours passed, in which no action was taken, after the joint decision was made not to burn out the line.

At about 2000 hours there was discussion by members of the tractor crew that the fire was picking up and it would be well to move out of the canyon bottom. Klepperich at this time reiterated that they would work until 2100 hours, and then go out to be refueled. This had been his decision at the time he talked to Hayden and nobody questioned it.

At about 2000 hours, Klepperich gave the order to start moving back toward Point B but to widen the line as they went. He assigned one cat under Cat Boss Tim McMullen to clean up the Edison Road (C to F, on Attachment #2). This cat moved out faster than the other three and got ahead. At approximately 2100 this cat, supervised by McMullen, stopped work and moved up the Edison Road and out toward Point A, arriving at the saddle (E) ahead of the fire storm. This cat was one of four, and the only one to escape unscathed.

At about 2100 hours the other three cats gathered at Point F. Klepperich and the others discussed the best way out. Klepperich decided on the fuel break (F to B) because they were familiar with it and he believed there was a protective hose-lay at the top. (From interview with hospitalized survivors.) They agreed the firebreak was the best way out and all started up the firebreak. By the time they got about half way up the slope (from Point F to B) the fire had intensified and there was spotting on each side of the firebreak.

Klepperich, about this time, realized he was in trouble and apparently decided to gather together and try to withstand the fire coming up each side of the ridge toward his cats and crew. One of the cats was caught when the flames laid over and burned the hands of the operator (Point X). He was injured and unable to control the cat, so he jumped off. The cat rolled back down the ridge and out of the action. The operator of the lost cat ran up and got on the lead cat. They abandoned the idea of digging in at this point and moved up the ridge to the approximate point where the fire caught them and stopped all forward progress (see Attachment #3). Here, the lead cat (1) stopped and weathered the fire storm. The second cat (2) tried to dig in and was not successful. The ground was too hard and the firebreak too narrow. All on the second cat died. All on the lead cat survived, but were badly burned.

## FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS

1. All personnel involved in the fire planning and in the accident were experienced and met current requirements for the fire assignments they had.
2. Fire weather predictions were correct for the general area of the accident. The local fire storm which caused the tragedy could probably not have been predicted by anybody prior to an hour or so before the accident (on-the-ground overhead made this late prediction).
3. Somewhere between 1/2 to 3/4 of an hour before the fire storm and tragedy, several people realized the cats might be in jeopardy and tried, by radio, to contact Klepperich to give him advice and orders. Inadequate, partially inoperative radio equipment made this warning and advice impossible.

The radios being used by the tractor crew were 1952 vintage (the same year as the rest of the Los Padres radio net). Two radios were assigned to the crew. One was malfunctioning and could not transmit. These handy-talkies have a telephone type handset and the receiver must be held against the ear in order to hear a call when near equipment. This is not proper equipment for fireline work. Many calls were made to Klepperich from people in charge of his operation, but no answer was received because Klepperich did not hear the call!

4. The contracted tractors assigned to this line were all equipped with "U" blades. This type of equipment is designed for moving large quantities of earth on flat ground. It is very inefficient in a brush-clearing and pioneering operation. In order to construct a line from Point B to Santa Monica Canyon, Point D, pioneering work was required. This equipment could not accomplish that task in the time allowed. R-5 Fireline Notebook indicates two hours would have been sufficient to complete this line--five hours were spent and the line was still considered to be inadequate, according to Klepperich's evaluation.

Use of contract bulldozers with operators not necessarily expert in fire fighting in lieu of well-equipped trail builders with experienced fireline-trained operators is the mode of operation in the U. S. F.S. This really is an impractical, and economically indefensible practice. It has been accepted by the organization because of ceilings and lack of funding. Every other professional wildland firefighting organization in California has specially

designed and equipped fireline-building bulldozers with adequate communications.

Properly designed, equipped, and supervised bulldozers are probably our best line-constructing tool. Our practice of obtaining them from local dirt-moving contractors on a moment's notice is not practical nor economically defensible. Good equipment with adequate radio communications would probably have made this report unnecessary.

5. There were no fire shelters or fire-resistant blankets available on the sector where this tragedy occurred. R-5 policy makes this requirement optional and, admittedly, it is difficult to augment the requirement when hundreds of tractors are put under potential use contracts each year. In an average year, only a small, unpredictable number of these tractors are used. Only emphasis and funding are required to provide fire shelters on all cats committed to line construction in California.

The Committee agreed that adequate fire shelters would have drastically reduced or eliminated the damage in this accident.

6. The line from Point B to C (See Attachment #2 for these reference points) had inadequate safety zones built into it. Safety zones should have been constructed by Klepperich as the line progressed. Obvious locations were between B and F, and at F, as well as several others. Adequate safety zones could have prevented this tragedy.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

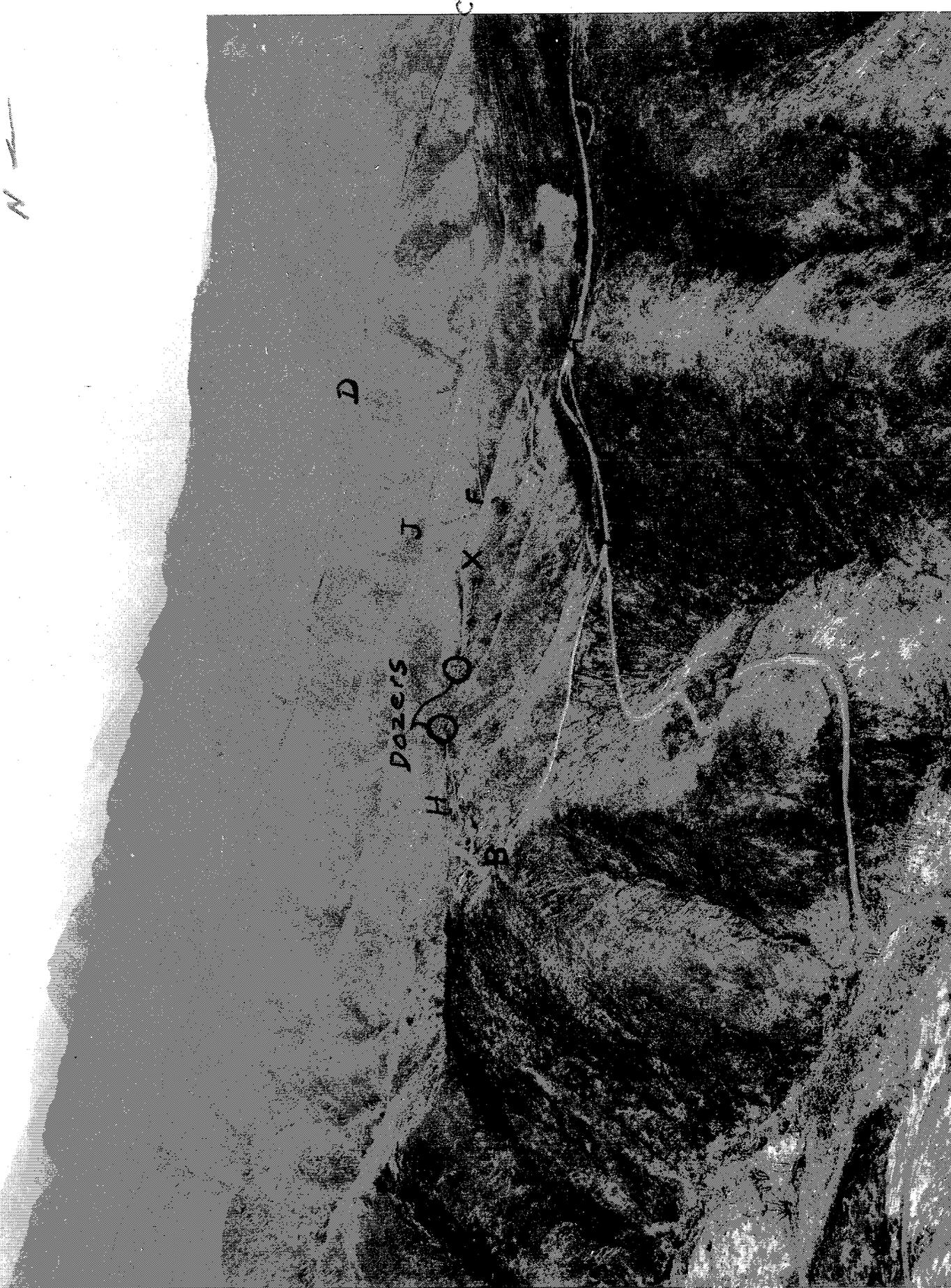
1. Require Class I Fire Boss approval, in writing, of indirect fireline construction in certain fuel types in California.
2. Assign a Division Boss caliber individual with sole responsibility as Safety Officer on each sector of indirect line construction (or other potentially complicated or dangerous fire control jobs) in California
3. Require adequate communications at all times with crews or equipment in vulnerable fire control jobs. (This recommendation is met by all other professional wildland fire-fighting organizations in California.)
4. Recognize that wildland firefighting in California requires professional expertise and refuse to accept anything less. Because of ceilings on manpower and expenditures, we are asking people with inadequate experience and training to accept highly complicated wildland fire control jobs under conditions in California which are recognized as the most complex and explosive in the world. Here we have a choice-- accept the losses, or finance the ceiling, training, and equipment necessary to field adequately trained, supervised, and equipped firefighting forces.  

*Handwritten note:* Each year the Forest Service in California is relying more and more on people trained to supervise timber sales, build roads, take soil samples, etc., to fight our fires. This practice serves to place inexperienced people in critical jobs and to lower the quality of the resource management job because these people are away fighting fires instead of supervising the timber industry or the road contractor.
5. Best possible protective equipment should be supplied to firefighters. This should be researched and augmented in California first.

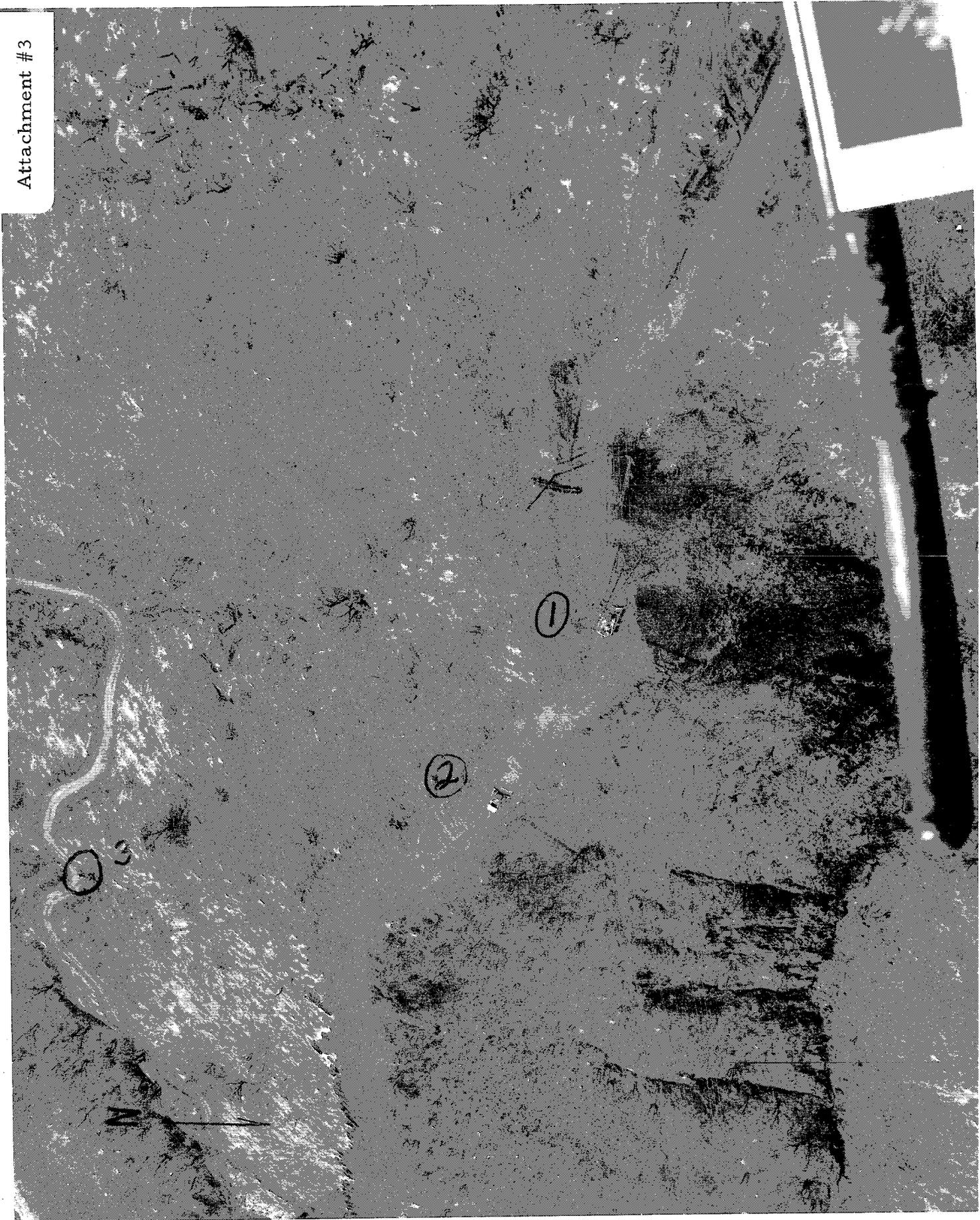
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N



Attachment #3



LARGE FIRE REPORT  
National Fire Coordination Center

ATTACHMENT #4

Region 5 A. Fire Romero B. Forest Los Padres

C. Started 10/6/71 D. Threaten Homes and property

E. Cause unknown F. Location T. 4N R. 26W Sec. 3  
T. \_\_\_\_\_ R. \_\_\_\_\_ Sec. \_\_\_\_\_

G. Landmark City of Montecito Damages: Watershed - \$1,250,000  
Other - 540,000

H. Cover Type Brush

	Date	10/7	10/8	10/12	10/19
	Time	0900	0830	1000	1200
	Taken by	Young	Young	Young	Young
I. Acres = NF		2500	4600		7,360
Other Inside		0			8,240
Other Outside		0	500		500
TOTAL		2500	5100	12,100	16,100
J. Cost to date		\$95,075	\$238,220	\$1,037,700	\$1,642,279
K. Estimated Total Cost		\$175,000	\$750,000	\$1,900,000	\$1,800,000
L. Estimated Control				Not known	
Contained					10/13/71
Controlled					1800 10/16/71
M. Weather-Wind	<u>Santa Ana<sup>Z</sup></u>			4 - 8 MPH	light
Temp	<u>70°- 80°</u>			70°- 80°	70°- 80°
Hum.	<u>10-15%</u>			10-15%	30%
N. Outlook	<u>Extreme</u>			Favorable	Favorable
O. Firefighters	<u>1000</u>			2135	225 and

P. Special (Date each entry) 10 dozers  
4 helicopters

Four (4) fatalities (3 FS-Inyo NF personnel, 1-dozer operator).

Three (3) critical injuries. Lost 9-homes. Accident investigation team -- Rowlett and Qualls - W.O., Moore - R-1, James - R-5, Greene - O.I.G.

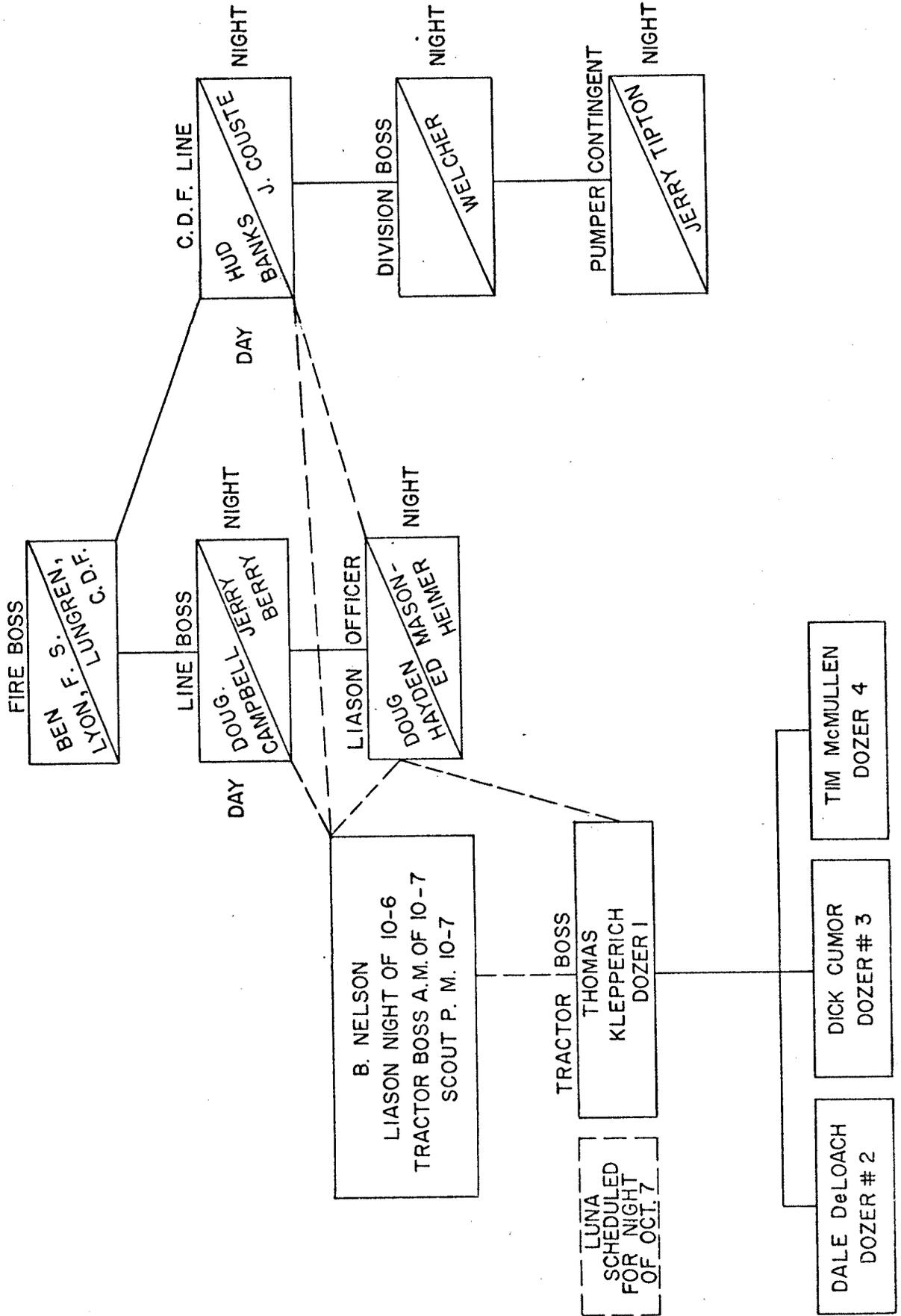
Infrared Mapper - King Air used to map fire. National Radio Cache Radios used on fire. C-130 made 7 to 10 drops. Fire Boss - Ben Lyons. Six (6) man overhead training team from both R-8 and R-9.

1500 chains built -- 0 chains to build. Romero Fire camp closed down.

2000 10/17/71. All off Forest crews and O.H. released and will have gone (by noon 10/18.

Distribution: #2, #3

# ROMERO FIRE ORGANIZATION - FOR TRAGEDY DIVISION OCT. 7, 1971



LOS PADRES N.F.  
FIRE ASSIGNMENT SHEET

FIRE Romero DATE 10-7-71 SHIFT Day  
 FIRE BOSS Ben Lyas CONTROLLER \_\_\_\_\_  
 LINE BOSS Doug Casadball  
 PLANS CHIEF Alfano SERVICE CHIEF Rebar FINANCE CHIEF Bachman  
 MAPS & RECORDS OFF. Hilber EQUIPMENT OFF. Low TIME OFFICER \_\_\_\_\_  
 MAPS & RECORDS OFF. Coffey TANKER MGR. \_\_\_\_\_ EQUIP. TIME RECORDER \_\_\_\_\_  
 INTELLIGENCE OFF. \_\_\_\_\_ TRACTOR MGR. Support 1/1/72  
 SCOUT \_\_\_\_\_ TRUCK MGR. \_\_\_\_\_  
 P.I.O. Crosby MECHANIC MGR. Lundhagen  
 FIRE BEHAVIOR OFF. de la Cruz CAMP OFFICER Winters  
 WEATHERMAN Ellis TOOL MGR. C. Stewart  
 SAFETY OFFICER \_\_\_\_\_ SUPPLY OFF. \_\_\_\_\_  
 COMMUNICATIONS OFF. Martin

## SAFETY MESSAGE

*Watch for gusty wind  
condition*

## STANDARD FIREFIGHTING ORDERS

1. KEEP INFORMED ON FIRE WEATHER CONDITIONS AND FORECASTS.
2. KNOW WHAT YOUR FIRE IS DOING AT ALL TIMES -- OBSERVE PERSONALLY, USE SCOUTS.
3. BASE ALL ACTIONS ON CURRENT AND EXPECTED BEHAVIOR OF FIRE.
4. POST A LOOKOUT WHEN THERE IS POSSIBLE DANGER.
5. BE ALERT, KEEP CALM, THINK CLEARLY, ACT DECISIVELY.
6. MAINTAIN PROMPT COMMUNICATION WITH YOUR MEN, YOUR BOSS, AND ADJOINING FORCES.
7. GIVE CLEAR INSTRUCTIONS AND BE SURE THEY ARE UNDERSTOOD.
8. MAINTAIN CONTROL OF YOUR MEN AT ALL TIMES.
9. FIGHT FIRE AGGRESSIVELY BUT PROVIDE FOR SAFETY FIRST.

## FIRE SITUATIONS THAT "SHOUT 'WATCH OUT!'"

1. YOU ARE BUILDING LINE DOWNHILL TOWARD A FIRE.
2. YOU ARE FIGHTING FIRE ON A HILLSIDE WHERE ROLLING MATERIAL CAN IGNITE FUEL BELOW.
3. YOU NOTICE THE WIND BEGINS TO BLOW OR INCREASE OR CHANGE DIRECTION.
4. YOU FEEL THE WEATHER GETTING HOTTER AND DRIER.
5. YOU ARE ON A LINE IN HEAVY COVER WITH UNBURNED FUEL BETWEEN YOU AND THE FIRES.
6. YOU ARE AWAY FROM BURNED AREA WHERE TERRAIN AND/OR COVER MAKES THE TRAVEL DIFFICULT.
7. YOU ARE IN COUNTRY YOU HAVE NOT SEEN IN THE DAYLIGHT.
8. YOU ARE IN AN AREA WHERE YOU ARE UNFAMILIAR WITH LOCAL FACTORS INFLUENCING FIRE BEHAVIOR.
9. YOU ARE ATTEMPTING A FRONTAL ASSAULT ON A FIRE WITH TANKERS.
10. YOU ARE GETTING FREQUENT SPOT FIRES OVER YOUR LINE.
11. YOU CANNOT SEE THE MAIN FIRE AND YOU ARE NOT IN COMMUNICATION WITH ANYONE WHO CAN.
12. YOU ARE BEING COVERED BY AN ASSAULTING OR REBURNING FIRE BEHIND YOU.
13. YOU FEEL LIKE TAKING A LITTLE NAP NEAR THE FIRE LINE.

DATE 11/11/50  
DIVISION I Division Boss J. DEVLIN

SECTOR \_\_\_\_\_ Sector Boss (blank)

Crew Bosses: JOHN MONROE, (DEVS)

Crews	No. of Men	Tanker Boss
<u>MOORE</u>	<u>20</u>	<u>Tankers</u>
<u>CLARA #2</u>	<u>20</u>	<u>Foreman</u>
		<u>2 (CLASS 3) OVERT HORNE</u>
		<u>2 (CLASS 1) SURIENET SHUNT</u>

Tractor Boss \_\_\_\_\_

Tractor \_\_\_\_\_

Instructions TRUCK TO MOST WESTERN POINT OF  
DIVISION WORK HARD LINE NEWEST WEST FLANK  
TIE LINE TO EXISTING POWER LINE  
(Start in at lower Romero)

SECTOR \_\_\_\_\_ Sector Boss ROMERO

Crew Bosses: CROWDER, RICE, TOWN, C. TRINER, PRICE

Crews	No. of Men	Tanker Boss
<u>SARATON #1</u>	<u>20</u>	<u>Tankers</u>
<u>BURTON #1</u>	<u>10</u>	<u>Foreman</u>

Tractor Boss \_\_\_\_\_

Tractor \_\_\_\_\_

Instructions Right on EAST Valley - Go Right on  
Romero Canyon Road to Bella Vista Right on  
Bella Vista to Romero Canyon

SECTOR \_\_\_\_\_ Sector Boss \_\_\_\_\_

Crew Bosses: \_\_\_\_\_

Crews	No. of Men	Tanker Boss
_____	_____	<u>Tankers</u>
_____	_____	<u>Foreman</u>
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____

Tractor Boss \_\_\_\_\_

Tractor \_\_\_\_\_

Instructions \_\_\_\_\_

Fire ROMERO Date 11-1-54 Day WED

DIVISION II

Division Boss KEVIN BRACKENRICE (LASCO)

SECTOR B

Sector Boss SCOTT BRACKENRICE

Crew Bosses: SUMNERFIELD, SUPER (510)

Crews	No. of Men	Tanker Boss	
<u>LASSEN</u>	<u>18</u>	<u>Tankers</u>	<u>Foreman</u>
<u>NOT PLANNED #6</u>	<u>20</u>	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____

Tractor Boss \_\_\_\_\_

Tractor 2 DOZERS

Instructions TRUCK TO CANYON SADDLE RD THE  
IN ON SECTOR ALONG ROAD. IMPROVE LINE IN  
SECTOR - PAY PARTICULAR ATTENTION TO IMPROVE  
CONSTRUCTION ON EASTERN PORTION OF SECTOR.

SECTOR A Sector Boss VICE (SUPERVISOR)

Crew Bosses: WITMER (SUPERVISOR), HARPER (SUPERVISOR)

Crews	No. of Men	Tanker Boss	
<u>TANOR #1</u>	<u>18</u>	<u>Tankers</u>	<u>Foreman</u>
<u>COOPER #1</u>	<u>20</u>	<u>125</u>	<u>AGNEE #1000</u>
<u>SHAW T.</u>	<u>19</u>	_____	_____
<u>BLACKWELL #4</u>	<u>19</u>	_____	_____

Tractor Boss \_\_\_\_\_

Tractor 2 DOZERS

Instructions TRUCK TO ROMERO SADDLE - THE  
IN WITH NIGHT DIVISION BOSS BOB RIGHETTI  
WORK LINE DOWN FROM TOP OF RIDGE TO  
ROMERO CANYON ROAD. HOLD & IMPROVE LINE  
ACROSS TOP OF RIDGE.

SECTOR \_\_\_\_\_ Sector Boss \_\_\_\_\_

Crew Bosses: \_\_\_\_\_

Crews	No. of Men	Tanker Boss	
_____	_____	<u>Tankers</u>	<u>Foreman</u>
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____

Tractor Boss \_\_\_\_\_

Tractor \_\_\_\_\_

Instructions \_\_\_\_\_

Date 1/11/42 Division III Division Boss W. J. Lewis

SECTOR D Sector Boss C. W. Long (Mendo)

Crew Bosses: Person (Mendo) P. Brown

Crews	No. of Men	Tanker Boss	Foreman
<u>MENDOZINO</u>	<u>16</u>	<u>Tankers</u>	<u>Foreman</u>
<u>SINISTRAS</u>	<u>20</u>		
<u>BLACKBURN #6</u>	<u>19</u>	<u>w/sector boss THOMAS, C. B. LITTEER,</u>	
			<u>FENKION</u>
			<u>MARCELO</u>
			<u>SILVERO</u>

Tractor Boss \_\_\_\_\_  
Tractor 1 DOZER

Instructions TRUCK TO CAMINO CIELO TO A POINT  
BEYOND WATER TANKS - HOLD LINE ALONG FOREMAN  
CONSTRUCT HAND LINE DOWN CANYON IF CONDITIONS  
PERMIT.

SECTOR C Sector Boss STINGER (Mendo)

Crew Bosses: Lopez (Mendo) D. Williams

Crews	No. of Men	Tanker Boss	Foreman
<u>ELCADO #1</u>	<u>19</u>	<u>Tankers</u>	<u>Foreman</u>
<u>W. Williams #3</u>	<u>20</u>		

Tractor Boss \_\_\_\_\_  
Tractor 2 DOZERS

Instructions TRUCK TO CAMINO CIELO TO A  
POINT BEYOND WATER TANKS - IMPROVE LINE ALONG  
SLOP OVER. HOLD LINE ALONG FOREMAN.

SECTOR \_\_\_\_\_ Sector Boss \_\_\_\_\_

Crew Bosses: \_\_\_\_\_

Crews	No. of Men	Tanker Boss	Foreman
_____	_____	<u>Tankers</u>	<u>Foreman</u>
_____	_____		
_____	_____		

Tractor Boss \_\_\_\_\_  
Tractor \_\_\_\_\_

Instructions \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

BLACK EAGLES #4

FLY FROM BASE HELIPORT  
TO ROMERO SADDLE -

TIE IN WITH DIVISION  
BOSS - BAKERVILL -

DIVISION II SECTOR A

TOOK UP FOR LINA COUNCIL  
AND HOLDING ACTUAL

50-50

*[Signature]*

NATIONAL WEATHER SERVICE

Southern California Fire Weather Mobile Unit  
No. 62-2

Forecast No. 1

Romero Fire,  
Los Padres National Forest,

Forecast for night of Wed-Thurs, Oct. 6-7, 1971  
Issued 0000PDT, Oct. 7

General: Since last Friday a large high pressure area centered over Idaho and Utah has given So. Calif. hot dry weather with strong NE Santa Ana winds over the Angeles and San Bernardino Forests, and moderate NE wind over the higher ridges of the Los Padres. This high has weakened a little, but cold air aloft coming in from western Canada is expected to strengthen it again by Friday to give stronger Santa Ana winds by Friday night. In the Romero Fire area this will strengthen N to NE winds over ridge tops and at night down the N to S canyons and will continue the dry hot weather in the front country.

Wind: Mostly light downslope from N on S facing slopes. There is a threat of occasional N winds down Romero canyon tonight and early Thursday morning with gusts to 15 or 20mph. Over the ridge top, wind NE to E 7 to 15mph.

Humidity: Will rise to about 40% at lower end of fire when wind is light. If stronger downcanyon winds develop, humidity will drop sharply to 12 to 15% while wind blows. On the ridge top humidity will stay low all night, mostly in 15 to 20% range.

Temperature: Will lower to about 65 deg by morning at lower end of fire, but jump up to 75 to 80 in local windy places. Over ridge top low temp about 75.

Outlook for Thursday: Weather should be very much like Wednesday. Dry and hot with high 90s at lowest levels of fire and about middle 80s at ridge top. Humidity down to 12% late morning hours at lower levels but picking up to about 20% in late afternoon. On ridge top very low all day, mostly 8-10%. Southwest winds developing in afternoon on S facing slopes and canyons, 5 to 10 mph late morning, 7 to 15 sometimes gusty in mid afternoon, dying out in evening.

George R. Ellis,  
Fire Weather Forecaster



Thursday, Oct. 7, 1971  
0745 PDF

To: Mr. Ben Lyon, Fire Boss:  
From: Mr. Clem Crouch, Fire Behavior Officer  
Subject: Romero Fire-

Following is Predicted Fire Behavior for Today:

Fuels: East flank, heavy mixed chaparral. North flank, grassy fuels along east Camino Cielo fuel break. West flank ~~XXXX~~ medium to heavy fuel with prominent rock outcrops. South flank, orchards, residential housing, stables, barns, and urban population buildup.

Topography: Fire area steep and rugged.

Weather and Fire Behavior: Relaxing offshore pressure gradients indicate that SW upslope, upcanyon winds beginning mid morning mostly 4 to 7 mph increasing to maximum in mid and late afternoon to mostly 7 to 15 but with gust periods to 20 or 25 briefly in hot south facing or W facing slopes and canyons. Over ridge tops E to NE winds a little lighter and more variable than yesterday: mostly 5 to 12 mph in morning, but switching to mostly ~~XXXX~~ SE to SW in the afternoon. Occasional eddying and turbulence on lee (south side) of ridge top in morning hours also at upper ends of canyons such as Romero canyon due to conflict between ~~XXXX~~ easterly ridge wind and S to SW slope wind. By evening SW winds will die down to 4 to 8 mph and become near calm in more protected canyons, with light northerly downslope-downcanyon wind later in evening.

Humidity will rise some as compared to yesterday in low and middle levels due to increased SW flow, but will remain very low above about 2000ft elevation. Lowest this PM at 1500 ft level about 18% and on ridge top about 8%. Will rise tonight to high of about 60% at 1000ft level but stay low, not above 20% at ridge top level.

A little cooler today than yesterday. Maximum in mid 90s at 1000 ft level and low 80s at ridge top level. Low temperatures tonight not much different from last night.

Based on predicted weather pattern, the following fire behavior is predicted for each of the following flanks of the fire:

East Flank: Considered most probable critical area of fire. SW wind pattern should cause rate of spread to move E and NE. Caution is necessary in construction of any line from E Camino Cielo fuel break southward to urban orchard areas. Fast-moving fire and heavy spotting can be expected on east flank. With heavy fuels, steep topography, and upcanyon drafts, the ridge and distance from fire head will have to be carefully located. Commitment of men and equipment on E flank will have to be done ~~XXXX~~ with consideration of starting at bottom and working up with some commitment from the top down. It might be necessary to flank the east front by making most of commitment from bottom up.



U.S. DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE  
National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration  
NATIONAL WEATHER SERVICE

North Flank: From predicted weather pattern it appears that the north flank will be subject to a fire front coming up to meet it on top of the east Camino Cielos ridge and fuel break. I say this, as this is the pattern that developed on the afternoon of Oct. 6, the day the fire started and ran up to the Romero Saddle causing slopovers. The north flank will be subject to the same pattern in the afternoon of today. As the fire hits the north flank, spotting across the fuel break can be expected. Eddying at times may carry fire downslope on lee side of ridges due to NE influence at higher levels. Fire front and spotting can be expected on north flank. Crews and equipment moving east along the Camino Cielo fuel break should be careful not be over-extended to the east of where the fire may hook in behind them. Progress to the east along said ridge should be carefully judged in view of the fire meeting said ridge.

West Flank: Again, from weather pattern it is expected that the total control effort on the west flank can be done in a more safe condition than either the east or the north flanks. The forward rate of spread should be as predicted in a north and northeast direction. However, the upslope drafts may be expected to carry the main fire up those canyons running in a north or northwest direction. Flanking the fire from the bottom up in a direct attack may be possible and desirable. Men and equipment proceeding down from the top should be done with due caution.

South Flank: This flank is considered to be the safest flank from line construction standpoint as again based on weather predictions the fire should be burning in a N and NE direction. Coordination between coordinating fire agencies who probably will be putting their effort on the south flank should be of the utmost to prevent the setting of any backfire or burnout along the south flank, for the purpose of protecting residences and other improvements, that could lead to endangering any men and much equipment previously committed to the east flank.

THIS PREDICTION IS FOR MORNING AND EARLY AFTERNOON ONLY OF OCT. 7 ONLY. AN UPDATED REPORT WILL BE ISSUED IN MID AFTERNOON.

*G. H. Grouch*  
G.H. Grouch,  
Fire-Behavior Officer

LOS PADRES N.F.  
FIRE ASSIGNMENT SHEET

FIRE Romero DATE 10-7-71 SHIFT Nite  
 FIRE BOSS Ben Lyon CONTROLLER \_\_\_\_\_  
 LINE BOSS Jerry Berry  
 PLANS CHIEF Alfaco SERVICE CHIEF Robert FINANCE CHIEF Beckman  
 MAPS & RECORDS OFF. Alfaco EQUIPMENT OFF. Joe Lewis TIME OFFICER \_\_\_\_\_  
 MAPS & RECORDS OFF. \_\_\_\_\_ TAXIEN MGR. \_\_\_\_\_ EQUIP. TIME RECORDER \_\_\_\_\_  
 TRACTOR MGR. \_\_\_\_\_  
 INTELLIGENCE OFF. Alfaco TRUCK MGR. \_\_\_\_\_  
 SCOUT Alfaco MECHANIC MGR. Turbine  
 P.I.O. Alfaco CAMP OFFICER Bob  
 FIRE BEHAVIOR OFF. Alfaco TOOL MGR. P. Schmitt  
 WEATHERMAN Alfaco SUPPLY OFF. \_\_\_\_\_  
 SAFETY OFFICER \_\_\_\_\_ COMMUNICATIONS OFF. Alfaco

SAFETY MESSAGE

## STANDARD FIREFIGHTING ORDERS

1. KEEP INFORMED ON FIRE WEATHER CONDITIONS AND FORECASTS.
2. KNOW WHAT YOUR FIRE IS DOING AT ALL TIMES -- OBSERVE PERSONALLY, USE SCOUTS.
3. TAKE ALL ACTIONS ON CURRENT AND EXPECTED BEHAVIOR OF FIRE.
4. LOOK FOR LOGGERS WHEN THERE IS POSSIBLE DANGER.
5. BE ALERT, KEEP CALM, THINK CLEARLY, ACT DECISIVELY.
6. MAINTAIN FREQUENT COMMUNICATION WITH YOUR MEN, YOUR BOSS, AND ADJOINING FORCES.
7. GIVE CLEAR INSTRUCTIONS AND BE SURE THEY ARE UNDERSTOOD.
8. MAINTAIN CONTROL OF YOUR MEN AT ALL TIMES.
9. FIGHT FIRE AGGRESSIVELY BUT PROVIDE FOR SAFETY FIRST.

## FIRE SITUATIONS THAT "SHOUT 'WATCH OUT!'"

1. YOU ARE BUILDING UPON DOWNHILL TOWARD A FIRE.
2. YOU ARE FIGHTING FIRE ON A HILLSIDE WHERE BURNING MATERIAL CAN IGNITE YOUR BRUSH.
3. YOU NOTICE THE WIND SHIFTING TO BACK OR INSTANT CHANGE DIRECTION.
4. YOU FEEL THE WEATHER GETTING HOTTER AND WIER.
5. YOU ARE ON A LINE IN HEAVY COVER WITH UNBURNED WOOD BETWEEN YOU AND THE FIRE.
6. YOU ARE AWAY FROM BURNING AREA WHERE TERRAIN OR LOGS COVER MAKES THE TRAVEL DIFFICULT.
7. YOU ARE IN COVER YOU HAVE NOT SEEN IN THE DARKNESS.
8. YOU ARE IN AN AREA WHERE YOU ARE UNFAMILIAR WITH LOCAL FACTORS AFFECTING FIRE BEHAVIOR.
9. YOU ARE ENCOUNTERING A SMOKE BARRIER ON A HILL OR RIDGE.
10. YOU ARE IN A SITUATION WHERE YOU ARE NOT SURE OF YOUR OWN POSITION.
11. YOU CANNOT SEE THE MAIN FIRE AND YOU ARE NOT IN COMMUNICATION WITH ANYONE WHO CAN.
12. YOU HAVE BEEN GIVEN AN ASSIGNMENT OR INSTRUCTIONS NOT CLEAR TO YOU.
13. YOU ARE BEING TAKEN A LITTLE TOO CLOSE TO THE FIRE.



U.S. DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE  
National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration  
NATIONAL WEATHER SERVICE

Forecast No. 3

WEATHER AND FIRE BEHAVIOR FORECAST FOR ROMERO FIRE  
Los Padres National Forest and Cooperating Agencies

Forecast for night of Thurs.-Fri. Oct. 7-8, 1971, Outlook for Friday

PART I- WEATHER

~~XXXX~~ General: Latest weather charts suggest only slight increase in dry Santa Ana type wind over ridges and, at night, down N-S canyons thru week-end. Slight increase in coastal onshore flow will continue thru tomorrow, ~~Thursday~~, and probably also on ~~Friday~~. This will cause moderate upslope-upcanyon winds on S slopes in afternoons, but with a moderate increase in humidity, especially in the lower levels of the fire area.

Wind: S to SW upslope-upcanyon winds will die out around sunset, becoming light and variable. Later in evening northerly downslope-downcanyon winds will begin, mostly light but occasionally up to 15mph down main canyons ~~and~~, such as Romero, Toro, and Oil canyons. Over the ridge wind will continue E to SE, mostly 6 to 12 but occasionally up to 18. On N side of ridge wind will be quite variable but usually light, mostly downslope SE to S 3 to 6 mph.

Temperature: Slightly cooler up to abt 3000ft lvl. Low at 1000ft level by sunrise about 60 deg. 75 deg at 3000ft lvl and 68 deg at 4000ft.

Humidity: In wind-protected lower lvls will rise to about 60% by morning. However where most of the action is, at lvls between 2000 and 3000ft will remain low, mostly between 10 and 18 percent. In canyons humidity will drop rapidly at times when ~~wind~~ downcanyon wind picks up a little, also below canyon mouths.

Outlook for ~~Thursday~~ <sup>Friday</sup>: Marine effect will be a little stronger with S to S' wind in late morning and in afternoon, in main S to N canyons mostly 2 to 6 in AM, 4 to 12 with ocnl gusts to 18 in PM. Ridge winds will continue easterly at 5 to 15 mph but at times switching to S to SW in PM. Light upcanyon northerly winds on N-facing slopes N of ridge, but light westerly in Santa Ynez valley. Temps in general a little cooler, down 3 to 6 degrees. Humidity higher in low lvls and including Santa Ynez valley, and slightly higher in higher levels....Friday should not see too much change.

Weather: We might see a cloud or two. San Diego got a light shower this morning, but our chances are about nil!

George R. Ellis,  
Fire-Weather forecaster

ROMERO FIRE,  
LOS PADRES N.F.



U.S. DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE  
National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration  
NATIONAL WEATHER SERVICE  
Southern Calif. Fire Weather Mobile Unit 6-62  
Forecast No. 3-A

Revised Forecast for some Weather Elements for Night of Oct. 7-8, 1971

General: Marine influence is strengthening more rapidly than the forecast issued at 11:30 this afternoon, Oct. 7. Humidity will rise to 80 to 90% with chance of fog below fire camp by morning, and to about 50% at 1500 foot level. On ridge top night-time humidity will be mostly between 15 and 25%.

Ridge-top winds will be more southerly than forecast. Instead of E to SE they will be mostly SE to SW, about same speed as originally forecast, or a little less strong. Northerly down-canyon winds will start later and be weaker than originally forecast, not over 8 mph.

The sea-breeze SW upslope-upcanyon wind will start earlier tomorrow and be stronger in afternoon, gusting to as high as 25 mph in main S to N canyons. Temps will be quite a bit cooler and humidities quite a bit higher in lower levels of fire Friday.

George R. Ellis,  
Fire-Weather Forecaster

ISSUED 2100 PDT 10/7

To: Mr. Ben Lyon, Fire Boss  
From: Mr. Clem Crouch,  
Fire Behavior Officer



U.S. DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE  
National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration  
NATIONAL WEATHER SERVICE

Subject: Romero Fire- Fire Behavior Predict. Thursday, Oct. 7, 1971 1600PDT

WEATHER AND FIRE-BEHAVIOR FORECAST FOR ROMERO FIRE

Ios Padres National Forest and Cooperating Agencies

Forecast for night of Thurs.-Fri., Oct. 7-8, 1971. Outlook for Friday

PART II- FIRE BEHAVIOR

Fuels: East flank, light to heavy mixed chapparal in both Santa Monica and Sutton canyons. North flank, grassy fuels on fuel break cleared for a distance of two to five tractor-blade widths, uncleared fuel break remains in grassy fuels. North of fuel break, medium to heavy mixed brush. West flank, heavy to medium with numerous rock outcroppings. South flank, fuels mostly burned out to orchards, residential landscaping, roads, driveways, etc.

Topography: Fire areas on east, north, and west flanks steep and rugged.. On south flank favorable to moderate in steepness and ruggedness.

Fire Behavior and Weather: For weather see part I of this report. Fire behavior is predicted for each of the following flanks of the fire:

East Flank: This is considered the most critical flank of the fire. Down-canyon flames can probably be expected starting around 2100. With this airflow pattern the safest condition for line construction to tie in the east flank from the bottom or the south flank would be to proceed east and northeast with indirect line on the west side of Santa Monica canyon to the forks in section 5., and burning out as the line progresses. No line should be constructed or built unless burning out is completed. Attempt to come down Hill on either the west or east fork of Santa Monica canyon should be given careful consideration and sound judgement in view of the rough topography, heavy fuels, lack of access, and open fire below. If a downhill approach is the decision, then it should only be done with burnout to the main fire as the line progresses. A combined effort of coming down from the top and going up from the bottom as previously described should be well and thoroughly coordinated, so that crews at all times are working against a good burned-out fire edge. If Franklin canyon is not considered for line construction, a ridge line about a mile to the east of Santa Monica canyon may offer possibilities. This ridge traverses sections 4 and 9 and is just east of Sutton canyon. The Franklin trail traverses this ridge from the Edison road on the south to the Carino Ciolo jeepway. The lower portion of this ridge has a cleared fireline for about a mile in length from the Edison road north to about a quarter of the way into section 4. Previously cut brush from the construction of this fire break is piled along the center of the firebreak. This ridge may offer a good backup ridge in the event Santa Monica Canyon is dropped.

North Flank: From an <sup>earlier</sup> reconnaissance made at 1430 today the north flank appeared to be pretty well covered. It had been burned out and was in the mop-up stage. Mopping in combination with tankers should be all that is needed for tonight, in view of a down-canyon southerly air flow and northeast influence tonight.



U.S. DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE  
National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration  
NATIONAL WEATHER SERVICE

Part II, FIRE BEHAVIOR, continued

West Flank: The burning pattern on the west flank today and this afternoon pretty well fit the predictions of this morning. There were no major runs and what burning did occur has helped to solidify the control by burning to the burn-out show progressing downward along the Romero Canyon road. Line construction proceeding up from the bottom should continue and tying to the Romero canyon road in the northwest corner of Section 3. A word of caution here is to know the whereabouts of the crew coming up from the bottom so that their effort shall be thoroughly coordinated with the burning out along the Romero Canyon road. This west flank is rocky and steep and the crews should be cautious of rolling rock and boulders. It is believed that the west flank can be secured tonight.

South Flank: Aerial reconnaissance indicates no major problems should occur on this south flank tonight, as it has been pretty well burned out with mop up going on. This flank has been turned over for control and mop up to the California Division of Forestry. The thing to watch here is that we are thoroughly coordinated with the C.D.F. on the west and particularly the east flanks, where they join the south flank on the south. The control effort to be done on the east flank tonight should be completely coordinated with any action contemplated by the C.D.F. on its south flank tonight.

THIS PREDICTION IS FOR THE NIGHT AND EARLY MORNING OF OCTOBER 7TH AND 8TH (THURSDAY AND FRIDAY). AN UPDATED REPORT WILL BE ISSUED ABOUT 1000 FRIDAY. ANY SIGNIFICANT CHANGE IN WEATHER AS IT MAY AFFECT FIRE BEHAVIOR WILL BE PROMPTLY REPORTED.

C. H. Crouch,  
Fire-Behavior Officer

Fire Roose Date 10-7-71 Shift NIGHT

DIVISION I Division Boss \_\_\_\_\_

SECTOR \_\_\_\_\_ Sector Boss \_\_\_\_\_

Crew Bosses: \_\_\_\_\_

Crews	No. of Men	Tanker Boss	
		Tankers	Foreman
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____

Tractor Boss \_\_\_\_\_

Tractor \_\_\_\_\_

Instructions OPERATING SERVICES TO HANDS

SECTOR \_\_\_\_\_ Sector Boss \_\_\_\_\_

Crew Bosses: \_\_\_\_\_

Crews	No. of Men	Tanker Boss	
		Tankers	Foreman
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____

Tractor Boss \_\_\_\_\_

Tractor \_\_\_\_\_

Instructions \_\_\_\_\_

SECTOR \_\_\_\_\_ Sector Boss \_\_\_\_\_

Crew Bosses: \_\_\_\_\_

Crews	No. of Men	Tanker Boss	
		Tankers	Foreman
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____

Tractor Boss \_\_\_\_\_

Tractor \_\_\_\_\_

Instructions \_\_\_\_\_

Fire ROVERO Date 10-7-71 Shift NIGHT

DIVISION II Division Boss Edwards

SECTOR \_\_\_\_\_ Sector Boss DAVIS

Crew Bosses: DAVIS, ROVERO, STONE, JOHNSON

Crews \_\_\_\_\_ No. of Men \_\_\_\_\_ Tanker Boss \_\_\_\_\_

S.A.R.D. (Jorgensen) 7 Tankers \_\_\_\_\_ Foreman \_\_\_\_\_

CUYAMA (DIAS) 4 525 CUCKETT

HANDCAMS FROM RIDGER 354 \_\_\_\_\_

TANKER 683 744 } 9 MEN

Tractor Boss Van Hette (Bachman M. 2. 4. 7. 4)

Instructions HOLD & IMPROVE LINE TO ROVERO

CUYAMA ROAD

SECTOR \_\_\_\_\_ Sector Boss \_\_\_\_\_

Crew Bosses: \_\_\_\_\_

Crews \_\_\_\_\_ No. of Men \_\_\_\_\_ Tanker Boss \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ Tankers \_\_\_\_\_ Foreman \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Tractor Boss \_\_\_\_\_

Tractor \_\_\_\_\_

Instructions \_\_\_\_\_

SECTOR \_\_\_\_\_ Sector Boss \_\_\_\_\_

Crew Bosses: \_\_\_\_\_

Crews \_\_\_\_\_ No. of Men \_\_\_\_\_ Tanker Boss \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ Tankers \_\_\_\_\_ Foreman \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Tractor Boss \_\_\_\_\_

Tractor \_\_\_\_\_

Instructions \_\_\_\_\_

Fire Romero Date 10-7-71 Shift NIGHT

DIVISION III Division Boss ROBERT I

SECTOR \_\_\_\_\_ Sector Boss Wesley

Crew Bosses: Wesley, Brown, Larson

Crews	No. of Men	Tanker Boss	Foreman
<u>L.P. HOTSHOTS</u>	<u>22</u>	<u>Tankers</u>	<u>FOREMAN</u>
<u>COBRA #4</u>	<u>19</u>	<u>15</u>	<u>SCHEINER</u>
_____	_____	<u>245</u>	<u>SHAWTZ</u>

Tractor Boss \_\_\_\_\_

Tractor \_\_\_\_\_

Instructions USE BEST JUDGMENT WHETHER TO  
FIRE OUT ROMERO COURSE ROAD OR COLD  
TRAIL FIRE'S EDGE.

SECTOR \_\_\_\_\_ Sector Boss \_\_\_\_\_

Crew Bosses: \_\_\_\_\_

Crews	No. of Men	Tanker Boss	Foreman
_____	_____	<u>Tankers</u>	<u>Foreman</u>
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____

Tractor Boss \_\_\_\_\_

Tractor \_\_\_\_\_

Instructions \_\_\_\_\_

SECTOR \_\_\_\_\_ Sector Boss \_\_\_\_\_

Crew Bosses: \_\_\_\_\_

Crews	No. of Men	Tanker Boss	Foreman
_____	_____	<u>Tankers</u>	<u>Foreman</u>
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____

Tractor Boss \_\_\_\_\_

Tractor \_\_\_\_\_

Instructions \_\_\_\_\_

Fire ROMERO Date 10-7-71 Shift NIGHT

DIVISION III Division Boss \_\_\_\_\_

SECTOR C Sector Boss CHAMBERLAIN

Crew Bosses: \_\_\_\_\_

Crews	No. of Men	Tanker Boss	
		Tankers	Foreman
_____	_____	<u>425</u>	<u>CASEY</u>
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____

Tractor Boss \_\_\_\_\_

Tractor \_\_\_\_\_

Instructions MEET UP & PATROL FROM SECTOR DIVISION EAST TO SECTOR DIVISION

SECTOR D Sector Boss ANDRIDGE

Crew Bosses: CASEY

Crews	No. of Men	Tanker Boss	
		Tankers	Foreman
<u>COBRA 45</u>	<u>19</u>	<u>425</u>	<u>MURPHY</u>
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____

Tractor Boss \_\_\_\_\_

Tractor \_\_\_\_\_

Instructions MEET UP & PATROL FROM SECTOR DIVISION EAST TO COURT WAREHOUSE LINE LEAVES ROAD. HAVE CREW MEET UP & IMPROVE HANDLINE ABOVE ROAD IN STOP OVER AREA.

SECTOR \_\_\_\_\_ Sector Boss \_\_\_\_\_

Crew Bosses: \_\_\_\_\_

Crews	No. of Men	Tanker Boss	
		Tankers	Foreman
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____

Tractor Boss \_\_\_\_\_

Tractor \_\_\_\_\_

Instructions \_\_\_\_\_

Fire Romero Date 10-7-70 Shift NIGHT

DIVISION E Division Boss \_\_\_\_\_

SECTOR E Sector Boss Thompson

Crew Bosses: Bender, Baker, Gonzalez

Crews	No. of Men	Tanker Boss	Tankers	Foremen
<u>OSCA 16</u>	<u>20</u>			
_____	_____			
_____	_____			

Tractor Boss \_\_\_\_\_

Tractor \_\_\_\_\_

Instructions Move up & patrol slope over area & improve work

SECTOR F Sector Boss \_\_\_\_\_

Crew Bosses: \_\_\_\_\_

Crews	No. of Men	Tanker Boss	Tankers	Foremen
_____	_____		<u>Lee</u>	<u>McCluskey</u>
_____	_____			
_____	_____			

Tractor Boss \_\_\_\_\_

Tractor \_\_\_\_\_

Instructions Move up & patrol slope

SECTOR \_\_\_\_\_ Sector Boss \_\_\_\_\_

Crew Bosses: \_\_\_\_\_

Crews	No. of Men	Tanker Boss	Tankers	Foremen
_____	_____			
_____	_____			
_____	_____			

Tractor Boss \_\_\_\_\_

Tractor \_\_\_\_\_

Instructions \_\_\_\_\_

Fire ROMERO Date 10-7-71 Shift NIGHT

DIVISION IT Division Boss MASON HEINER

SECTOR \_\_\_\_\_ Sector Boss LUNA

Crew Bosses: LOWRIE, WILSONS, CHARLEY

Crews \_\_\_\_\_ No. of Men \_\_\_\_\_ Tanker Boss \_\_\_\_\_

MASON HEINER TO COORDINATE Tankers \_\_\_\_\_ Foreman \_\_\_\_\_  
LINE CONST. W/ BOB GARDEN, CDE FIRE BOSS

Tractor Boss BLAKE HARVEY, RICHARD ALLEN

Tractor MERCER, & POWERS, OHLS, MURDOCK

Instructions TIE IN WITH 6 CDC HAND CREW  
& 3 CATS. CONSTRUCT CAT & HAND LINE  
EITHER ALONG EXISTING ROAD OR POWER  
LINE R/W. PUSH LINE AS FAR NORTH UP  
SANTA MONICA CANYON AS POSSIBLE.

SECTOR \_\_\_\_\_ Sector Boss \_\_\_\_\_

Crew Bosses: \_\_\_\_\_

Crews \_\_\_\_\_ No. of Men \_\_\_\_\_ Tanker Boss \_\_\_\_\_

Texas Longhorn 15? Tankers \_\_\_\_\_ Foreman \_\_\_\_\_

Little Tijuana 13? \_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_

Tractor Boss VINCENT SCOTT, WILLIAMS, COLEMAN

Tractor \_\_\_\_\_

Instructions Hand line from bottom up

SECTOR \_\_\_\_\_ Sector Boss \_\_\_\_\_

Crew Bosses: \_\_\_\_\_

Crews \_\_\_\_\_ No. of Men \_\_\_\_\_ Tanker Boss \_\_\_\_\_

Ridding Hills \_\_\_\_\_ Tankers \_\_\_\_\_ Foreman \_\_\_\_\_

Tractor Boss \_\_\_\_\_

Tractor \_\_\_\_\_

LOS PADRES N.F.  
FIRE ASSIGNMENT SHEET

FIRE Romero DATE 10-8-71 SHIFT Day  
 FIRE BOSS Ben Lyon COMPTROLLER \_\_\_\_\_  
 LINE BOSS Doug Campbell  
 PLANS CHIEF Dalen SERVICE CHIEF Rebar FINANCE CHIEF Bachman  
 MAPS & RECORDS OFF. Cocchi EQUIPMENT OFF. Bus Austin TIME OFFICER \_\_\_\_\_  
 MAPS & RECORDS OFF. J. Smith TANKER MGR. Houston Duck EQUIP. TIME RECORDER \_\_\_\_\_  
 TRACTOR MGR. Shawn Lagarde  
 INTELLIGENCE OFF. \_\_\_\_\_ TRUCK MGR. Lee McElroy  
 SCOUT \_\_\_\_\_ MECHANIC MGR. \_\_\_\_\_  
 P.I.O. Munsey CAMP OFFICER Bob Gresser  
 FIRE BEHAVIOR OFF. Cowan TOOL MGR. G. Stewart  
 WEATHERMAN G. Ellis SUPPLY OFF. H. Price (50)  
 SAFETY OFFICER \_\_\_\_\_ COMMUNICATIONS OFF. \_\_\_\_\_

## SAFETY MESSAGE

STANDARD FIREFIGHTING ORDERS

1. KEEP INFORMED ON FIRE WEATHER CONDITIONS AND FORECASTS.
2. KNOW WHAT YOUR FIRE IS DOING AT ALL TIMES -- OBSERVE PERSONALLY, USE SCOUTS.
3. BASE ALL ACTIONS ON CURRENT AND EXPECTED BEHAVIOR OF FIRE.
4. POST A LOOKOUT WHEN THERE IS POSSIBLE DANGER.
5. BE ALERT, KEEP CALM, THINK CLEARLY, ACT DECISIVELY.
6. MAINTAIN PROMPT COMMUNICATION WITH YOUR MEN, YOUR LOSS, AND ADJOINING FORCES.
7. GIVE CLEAR INSTRUCTIONS AND BE SURE THEY ARE UNDERSTOOD.
8. MAINTAIN CONTROL OF YOUR MEN AT ALL TIMES.
9. FIGHT FIRE AGGRESSIVELY BUT PROVIDE FOR SAFETY FIRST.

FIRE SITUATIONS THAT "SHOUT 'WATCH OUT!'"

1. YOU ARE BUILDING LINE DOWNHILL TOWARD A FIRE.
2. YOU ARE FIGHTING FIRE ON A HILLSIDE WHERE ROLLING MATERIAL CAN IGNITE FUEL BELOW.
3. YOU NOTICE THE WIND BEGINS TO FLUX OR INCREASE OR CHANGE DIRECTION.
4. YOU FEEL THE WEATHER GETTING HOTTER AND DARKER.
5. YOU ARE ON A LINE IN HEAVY COVER WITH UNBURNED FUEL BETWEEN YOU AND THE FIRES.
6. YOU ARE AWAY FROM BURNED AREA WHERE TERRAIN AND/OR COVER MAKES THE TRAVEL DIFFICULT.
7. YOU ARE IN COUNTRY YOU HAVE NOT SEEN IN THE DARKLIGHT.
8. YOU ARE IN AN AREA WHERE YOU ARE UNSURE OF LOCAL FACORS INFLUENCING FIRE BEHAVIOR.
9. YOU ARE APPROXIMATING A DANGER ZONE ON A FIRE OR THROUGH.
10. YOU ARE GETTING FREQUENTLY SLOW FIRES OVER YOUR LINE.
11. YOU CANNOT SEE THE MAIN FIRE AND YOU ARE NOT IN COMMUNICATION WITH ANYONE WHO CAN.
12. YOU ARE IN AN AREA WHERE YOU ARE UNSURE OF LOCAL FACORS INFLUENCING FIRE BEHAVIOR.

Fire Romero Date 10/8/71 Shift Day

DIVISION II Division Boss DOUG CAMPBELL

SECTOR \_\_\_\_\_ Sector Boss Romero

Crew Bosses: Crowder Rice Tamm C.B. Trainee-Paul

Crews	No. of Men	Tanker Boss	Tankers	Foreman
<u>Scorpion #1</u>	<u>20</u>			
<u>Black Hawk #1</u>	<u>19</u>			

Tractor Boss Ken OHL

Tractor \_\_\_\_\_

Instructions Improve and mop up line

SECTOR \_\_\_\_\_ Sector Boss \_\_\_\_\_

Crew Bosses: \_\_\_\_\_

Crews	No. of Men	Tanker Boss	Tankers	Foreman
_____	_____			
_____	_____			
_____	_____			

Tractor Boss \_\_\_\_\_

Tractor \_\_\_\_\_

Instructions \_\_\_\_\_

SECTOR \_\_\_\_\_ Sector Boss \_\_\_\_\_

Crew Bosses: \_\_\_\_\_

Crews	No. of Men	Tanker Boss	Tankers	Foreman
_____	_____			
_____	_____			
_____	_____			

Tractor Boss \_\_\_\_\_

Tractor \_\_\_\_\_

Instructions \_\_\_\_\_

Fire Ramona Date 10/6/71 Shift Day

DIVISION III Division Boss NELSON ROBERT

SECTOR \_\_\_\_\_ Sector Boss BODIE

Crew Bosses: WOODS

Crews \_\_\_\_\_ No. of Men \_\_\_\_\_ Tanker Boss \_\_\_\_\_

LASSEN F.S. REC 21 Tankers 415 Foreman Stewart

Tractor Boss \_\_\_\_\_

Tractor 2 (4 will move to Div. II) 125 Steve Hair

Instructions Tractors at Ramona saddle will be available as needed. Cold trail or fire out based on your decision for the morning

2 nurse tankers

SECTOR \_\_\_\_\_ Sector Boss \_\_\_\_\_

Crew Bosses: \_\_\_\_\_

Crews \_\_\_\_\_ No. of Men \_\_\_\_\_ Tanker Boss \_\_\_\_\_

Tankers \_\_\_\_\_ Foreman \_\_\_\_\_

Tractor Boss \_\_\_\_\_

Tractor \_\_\_\_\_

Instructions \_\_\_\_\_

SECTOR \_\_\_\_\_ Sector Boss \_\_\_\_\_

Crew Bosses: \_\_\_\_\_

Crews \_\_\_\_\_ No. of Men \_\_\_\_\_ Tanker Boss \_\_\_\_\_

Tankers \_\_\_\_\_ Foreman \_\_\_\_\_

Tractor Boss \_\_\_\_\_

Tractor \_\_\_\_\_

Instructions \_\_\_\_\_

DIVISION IV

Division Boss Ray Lee

SECTOR \_\_\_\_\_

Sector Boss \_\_\_\_\_

Crew Bosses: \_\_\_\_\_

Crews \_\_\_\_\_ No. of Men \_\_\_\_\_ Tanker Boss \_\_\_\_\_

Crews	No. of Men	Tankers	Foreman
<u>MENDACINO FS. reg</u>	<u>21</u>		
<u>STANISLAWS</u>	<u>21</u>	<u>215</u>	<u>Wallace</u>

Tractor Boss MARS & Thompson, BENDER

Tractor 2

Instructions Reconstruct road in section 35

SECTOR \_\_\_\_\_ Sector Boss \_\_\_\_\_

Crew Bosses: \_\_\_\_\_

Crews \_\_\_\_\_ No. of Men \_\_\_\_\_ Tanker Boss \_\_\_\_\_

Crews	No. of Men	Tankers	Foreman
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____

Tractor Boss \_\_\_\_\_

Tractor \_\_\_\_\_

Instructions \_\_\_\_\_

SECTOR \_\_\_\_\_ Sector Boss \_\_\_\_\_

Crew Bosses: \_\_\_\_\_

Crews \_\_\_\_\_ No. of Men \_\_\_\_\_ Tanker Boss \_\_\_\_\_

Crews	No. of Men	Tankers	Foreman
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____

Tractor Boss \_\_\_\_\_

Tractor \_\_\_\_\_

Instructions \_\_\_\_\_

Fire Romero Date 10/8/71 Shift Day  
 DIVISION II Division Boss Acton  
 SECTOR \_\_\_\_\_ Sector Boss DEVLYNE

Crew Bosses: \_\_\_\_\_

Crews \_\_\_\_\_ No. of Men \_\_\_\_\_ Tanker Boss \_\_\_\_\_

Crews	No. of Men	Tankers	Foreman
<u>Model T.S. Pca</u>	<u>22</u>		
<u>TAM 2 #1</u>	<u>20</u>	<del>4X4 211</del>	<del>James Sumar</del>
<u>SHANTA T. King</u>	<u>20</u>	<del>" " 325</del>	<del>S. MALONE</del>
<u>BLACK ENGINE #</u>	<u>17</u>	<del>" " 465</del>	<del>Ben Wisler</del>
Tractor Boss <u>QUINNIVAN, WISLER</u>			
<u>SWART'S</u>			

NEED 4X4 NURSE TANKER (OK Industri)

Tractor \_\_\_\_\_

Instructions \_\_\_\_\_

SECTOR \_\_\_\_\_ Sector Boss \_\_\_\_\_

Crew Bosses: \_\_\_\_\_

Crews \_\_\_\_\_ No. of Men \_\_\_\_\_ Tanker Boss \_\_\_\_\_

Crews	No. of Men	Tankers	Foreman
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____

Tractor Boss \_\_\_\_\_

Tractor \_\_\_\_\_

Instructions \_\_\_\_\_

SECTOR \_\_\_\_\_ Sector Boss \_\_\_\_\_

Crew Bosses: \_\_\_\_\_

Crews \_\_\_\_\_ No. of Men \_\_\_\_\_ Tanker Boss \_\_\_\_\_

Crews	No. of Men	Tankers	Foreman
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____

Tractor Boss \_\_\_\_\_

Tractor \_\_\_\_\_

Instructions \_\_\_\_\_





13. Timber burned (species, reprod. or mature) 14. Timber burned ~~1000~~

NONE

15. What does fire threaten (towns, valuable timber stands, etc.)

Homes - Carpenter Valley. - Carpenter - Wards

16. DAMAGES

Timber \$

Watered \$ 225,000.

Other \$ 540,000

17. Progress being made in control of fire

Chairs built: 750

Chairs to build: UNKNOWN

18. Special information, i.e., lives lost, serious injuries, loss of improvements, weather, etc.

Very difficult terrain in East end

Four fatalities in Santa Maria Co.

Control out look not good all this time

INSTRUCTIONS

The Ranger District or Forest Dispatcher will prepare a report on this form for all Class A, B and C fires. These reports will be attached to Form 100-2, Final Daily Fire Report, to back up FF fire notes, and filed in Forest Supervisor's Office.

The Forest Dispatcher is responsible for estimating daily FF cost of suppressing the fire. The estimated cost per day for personnel includes the following surcharges:

Subsistence \$7.50; Replacements, tools, etc., \$2.75; Camp expenses \$2.00; Warehouse expense (include extra help and servicing camps) \$2.00; Tool reconditioning \$1.50; Laundry \$0.50; Truck and car hire \$3.25; Communication \$0.50.

5/8/71

10-8-70 = 0600 to <sup>10-9-71</sup> 0600

3 - Mola Readers

13 - Nurse Tankers

14 - Transport & Lubers =

ROMERO FIRE

FIRE BEHAVIOR FORECAST FOR NIGHT OF OCT. 8-9, 1971

The east flank remains the most critical sector of the fire. The main movement of the fire will be upslope and upcanyon during most of the night. Above 1500 feet elevation the fire will ~~remain~~ remain active all night, particularly near the top of the main ridge. Winds will be gusty and erratic in this area and will cause erratic fire behavior. Watch for downslope fire runs when the northeast wind picks up in the early morning.

Below 1500 feet the fire activity will begin to decrease shortly after sundown and will continue to decrease in activity through the night. At the lower elevations much of the fire will go out in light fuels.

All fuels are extremely dry and spotting will continue to occur, particularly at the higher elevations. Use great caution in moving downhill on a fire.

C. M. Countryman

Fire Behavior Officer.

Forecast No. 4

**ROSEND FIRE,  
LOS PADRES NATIONAL FOREST  
And Cooperative Agencies**

**PRELIMINARY FORECAST FOR DAY OF FIRE, OCTOBER 8, 1971**  
Based on data available at 0600 PST

**General:** No important change occurs in local conditions or direction of local weather pattern. High will continue to shift eastward at 1000 mph, while marine influence from southwest to about 2000 ft. The low pressure moving influence is expected to cross the valley, likely, although only slightly more than yesterday. It is to be noted that generally wind influence over the area this morning, including the ridge to the west, the few reports now refer to humidity on ridge and upper end of canyon should run somewhat higher this morning than yesterday morning and increase further this afternoon.

Lower range outlook is still for a slight increase in westerly offshore wind influence by late Saturday or Sunday with lower humidity and a little warming on the south facing slopes.

**Wind:** Light to moderate during early morning hours; South of ridge mostly light to moderate; 10 to 15 mph in main canyon, 2 to 5 elsewhere. Warming thereafter, mostly 3 to 8 mph; all and strengthening on 9 to 12 mph in the valley in PM with occasional gusts to 20, outside of main canyon will be somewhat less strong. Over ridge, wind will be mostly 10 to 15 in morning, can be to back to 20 in PM and 10 to 15 in AM at times, mostly 5 to 15 mph, variable wind at times in the two ends of ridge.

**Humidity:** At lowest levels of 20% to 30% in early morning, crossing to 30% and at mid-day, but rising on PM to about 40 or 50%. More than 40% in morning hours 10 to 15 rising to 15 to 20% in afternoon.

**Temperatures:** Slightly cooler than yesterday. High at 1500 ft about middle 80s, on ridge top low 80s.

George R. Ellis,

Fire-Weather Forecaster

155UGD 0800 10/8



ROMERO FIRE,

LOS PADRES NATIONAL FOREST  
And Cooperating Agencies

PRELIMINARY FORECAST FOR DAY OF FRIDAY, OCTOBER 8, 1971

Based on data available at 0620 PST

General: No important change seen now in last evening's evaluation of large-scale weather pattern. Mild offshore wind condition continues at high levels, while marine influence has increased at lower levels of fire. The increased marine influence is expected to continue today, Friday, although only slightly more than yesterday. Light to moderate easterly wind influence over ridges this morning, ~~with~~ judging from the few reports now available humidity on ridges and upper end of canyons should run somewhat higher this morning than yesterday morning and increase further this afternoon.

Longer range outlook is still for a slight increase in dry offshore wind influence by late Saturday or Sunday with lower humidity and a little warming on the south facing slopes.

Wind: Light downcanyon during early morning hours, South of ridge mostly N or ~~NE~~ NE 4 to 10mph in main canyons, 2 to 6 elsewhere, becoming variable ~~at~~ sunrise and shifting to southerly upslope-upcanyon shortly thereafter, mostly 3 to 8 am AM and increasing to 5 to 12 in main canyons ~~with~~ in PM with occasional gusts to 20. Outside of main canyons wind will be somewhat less strong. Over ridgetops wind will be mostly E to NE in morning, bearing to back to SE in PM and even to S to SW at times, mostly 6 to 12 mph. Erratic wind at times ~~below~~ lee side of ridges.

Humidity: At lowest levels of fire up to 70% in early morning, dropping to 20% around mid-day, but rising in PM to about 30 or 35%. Above 2000 ft level in morning hours 12 to 18% rising to 15 to 25% in afternoon.

Temperature: Slightly cooler than yesterday. High at 1500 ft level middle 80s, on ridgetop low 80s.

George R. Ellis,

Fire-Weather Forecaster



ROMERO FIRE

Los Padres National Forest & Cooperating Agencies

FORECAST FOR DAY OF FRIDAY, OCT. 8, 1971 WITH OUTLOOKS FOR TONIGHT AND SAT.  
(Issued to supplement ~~xxxxxxx~~ Preliminary Forecast No. 4 issued at 0650)

General: High pressure area which was over Canadian-Washington, Montana line yesterday AM has moved southward to Idaho and northern Nevada. However, main thrust of cooler air appears to be east of Rockies, so only slight increase in offshore E to NE winds over hi ~~low~~ levels expected So. Calif. Increase in marine influence today will occur but will probably be less strong than indicated in yesterday evening's forecast. This marine influence will decrease tomorrow due to the slight strengthening of the ~~high~~ high inland.

Wind: Over ridges will be mostly E to NE in AM 8 to 15mph, tending to become E to SE in PM and at times around to SW. Forecast for canyon and slope winds S side looks OK; that is southerly 3 to 8 in AM increasing to 5 to 12 in PM with occasional gusts to 20, dying down in early evening. Outside main canyons southerly wind will be somewhat weaker. Some mild eddying and erratic wind can be expected on S side of ridge and at upper ends of canyons during PM.

Humidity: Lowering at 1500ft level to about 20% in mid day but rising to abt 35% by late afternoon. In higher levels ~~xxxx~~ 20 to 25 percent till mid morning, dropping to 10 to 15 till mid PM, then rising a little, about 5% in late afternoon.

Temperature: No great change from yesterday, but a degree or two cooler in lower levels.

Outlook for Fri Night and Saturday: No big change for tonight, but a little increase in ridge-top winds likely in late night & early morning hours, up to 25mph in windiest places, mostly NE but varying from N to E at times. This ridge wind should continue thru Saturday. Downcanyon winds may be a little stronger from N in S-facing canyons during late night hours, to about 15mph. Saturday, S to SW upcanyon-upslope wind a little weaker than today Friday. A few degrees warmer and humidity about 5-10% lower below 2000ft lvl Saturday.

George B. Ellis,  
Fire Weather Forecaster  
Issued 0945PDT

The following are paraphrased from the discussions with the various individuals interviewed. Much of the discussion was held as the accident review team walked over the area. For clarity, the topography is referred to as point \_\_\_ on photo # \_\_\_, and is interwoven into the statements of the individuals. Technically, the term "statement" could be called "discussion with" unless enclosed in quotes.

<u>Statements of:</u>	<u>Page</u>
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Doug Hayden's Statement Made on 10/9/71

" I arrived on the fire Thursday morning about 5:00 o'clock. I was assigned as Liaison Officer with the California Division of Forestry; it was responsible for this particular Division on Thursday. The Division came from the \_\_\_\_\_ Park area, up to this water tank, turned the corner here, and tried to work something in to going up the ridge. There had been some work done in here on Wednesday night; there was a CDF operation (their records would probably tell you how extensive that was --there were some pumpers and hand crews) and there were three dozers that worked in here all night Wednesday, the night the fire started. Smalley, Inc., were involved in that night's work. They had come up somewhere down in the Toro canyon area and had worked up to this water tank and had gone down to what is known as the Carpentaria fuel break which drops off into lower Santa Monica Canyon, goes up along this road over the top and on up towards Rincon. On Wednesday night, the three dozers (I'm sorry, there were four dozers) had gotten down to the bottom of Santa Monica Canyon, down off of this ridge here, and we drove down part way and walked down to take a look at it, and had come back up here when I arrived in here with the CDF personnel about 10:00 o'clock in the morning. Those machines at that time were out of fuel and the Inyo cat boss crew--four individuals came in to relieve Cahill and Smalley, and there were several others, and went on from there. One of the cats-- (three went down into Santa Monica) one was working this ridge that we are standing on--when I got out here, it looked like \_\_\_\_\_. The CDF operation, which was a task force of the Los Angeles county, really, were trying to make a stand on this little ridge right out here in front of us, and they had a couple of slopovers up in here, and there was quite a bit of fire down at the bottom of this little drainage, and so Hud Banks, the State California Division of Forestry line boss, and myself..."

As we walked along the top of the Santa Monica drainage, Doug Hayden continued to discuss the situation as follows:

About 11:30 on Thursday, we tried to bum out by torching from the top without much success. This is to the west of the ridge line which was the fire break above the water tank. California Division of Forestry took 300 to 500 gallon tankers into the canyon to the west of the ridge and began firing at the bottom. The two fires met quite hard and spotted over the ridge which again is the ridge which the water tank is located. The fire from the top had not burned so very well and was backing down sort of slowly; but when they started the fire at the bottom, both picked up and created the spotting over. About 2:30 in the afternoon at the water tank Cat bosses were assigned. We had five Cats. Cumor went with one. They were intending to burn out some spots here along the top of the ridge line. Assigned the four other Cats to work the future fire line in the Santa Monica Canyon area. One of the five Cats that were available that afternoon broke down and was pulled out about 6 PM.

Hayden estimates that about 5:00 PM the Cats were following the power line into the area that is shown as Point H on Attachment 2. Nelson has searched for a crossing to come back west to connect up the two dozer paths that are shown on Attachment 2 from approximately in the area of Point J and going east. Doug Campbell, the day line boss, and Jerry Berry, the night line boss, were here about 5 to 5:30 and looked the situation over. They talked about the alternatives to the route which we were currently working on. They talked about it not being able to hold it here, they would back off to the fire break below us which we earlier referred to as the Carpentaria fire line. This is a preplanned fire break. This is near the water tank as is shown on Attachment 10. About 5:00 to 5:30 Jerry Berry and Doug Campbell with Nelson went into the Santa Monica Canyon looking for ways to take Cats into it. They had attempted to connect the line up from the last ridge west of the Santa Monica Canyon over to the next spur ridge still further to the west. The bulldozers had run exploratory lines to the west. These were never able to connect up across the first tributary west of the Santa Monica Canyon. It was finally determined as comes out later in Doug Nelson's explorations, that the dozers could not go all the way into Santa Monica Canyon, but that they would work on an angle as far into the Canyon and as far up to the fork of the canyon as possible, somewhat on a flat bench. About 6:30 PM all four Cats were working on the fire line. The night plan arrived from the base camp and Jerry preceded the California Division of Forestry. About 7 PM the California Division of Forestry, Jerry Berry, a GI truck and a Miller catskiner and Masonheimer, who was the night Division boss, got together and had a discussion. This was between the water tank, as mentioned before, and the observation point which we have called point A on Attachment 2. Hayden called Klepperich about refueling. Klepperich reported that the Cats couldn't last beyond midnight on the amount of fuel they had. Klepperich is the Catboss, a U. S. Forest Service employee, who has been with the Cats since about 10 to 11 AM. The new Cat operators never went to their machines because of this decision that the Cat would come out to the vicinity of the water tanks for refueling later in the evening. These catskinners had been on since early morning, about 2 to 2:30 AM. It was mid afternoon before the D-7 Cat arrived and that in our photographs is Cat #2. It did have a fresh operator. The owner returned on Friday morning with a fresh operator. He had expected the previous man to run it until he arrived with a replacement. at 7:00 PM the Cats were at about their furthest point away and that's on the ridge above the Santa Monica Canyon. Downslope winds were beginning somewhat. Klepperich was overall Cat unit supervisor. He said he would be out at 10 to 11 PM. In his comment to Hayden when they had the radio conversation here about 7-7:30 PM, he told Hayden that they were planning to do some widening in the bottom of the feeder canyons. Evidently this was on the Edison road as later confirmed by the Cat operators. Hayden was sent to his assignment out here from home, as a Division boss. He left home about 4:45 AM. He reported to plans about 6 AM. At this time he specifically received a liaison assignment on this division with the CDF as responsible.

Masonheimer who was to take over after Hayden had arrived here about 7 PM, perhaps a little earlier. However, Masonheimer later confirms that it was well after dark, that he was using his headlights as he left base camp. Hayden got into this area on his assignment earlier in the day and then learned Forest Service Cats and Cat crews and radios were present. Under these conditions, Hayden told Banks that he, meaning Hayden, would continue to supervise the Cats. This was what was referred to there in the informal discussion as an open division with strategy being planned by Campbell, the day line boss. Jerry Berry, Bob Nelson, Fritz and Smalley and Cahill, were in here sometime earlier in the day before Hayden's assignment. 7:30 PM Hayden left for the base camp. About 8:15 he talked to Bob Lancaster, the Forest Supervisor, about 20 minutes and then to MacDonald, who is out of the Regional Office, and is the State and Private Forestry CM-2 officer. Byron Carniglia was in the gap east of the Santa Monica and about 7 PM. It was getting dark and he couldn't see the Cats working. Hayden said they made the decision not to backfire along the power line in order to buy time for the Cats. This means that area at approximately point B on Attmt. 2. About this time it had been discussed as why not refuel from the Edison Road. Generally, it was felt that it would be very difficult to get a large fuel truck down the Edison Road. This is a narrow road built by the power company to service the power line which is just above this area. Klepperich had said to Hayden some time earlier in the day that he suspected some headlights would be needed on these Cats since they had been working in the brush and the lights on the tractors were without guards. After dark, however, he said all lights were working O.K. Klepperich and Hayden did have radio communications in the afternoon and the early evening.

After this discussion with Hayden, Tim McMullen who is the lone Forest Service survivor in this, made his comments.

### Tim McMullen's Statement

Tim was called about 6 AM Thursday. He got to the base camp, Romero Base Camp, about 8 AM and received his assignment as a Cat boss. He was told to check with Nelson or Smalley as he remembered. Doug Nelson had been with the Cats from the time of their assignment in the morning hours of the night before. Cahill was at the water tank. Cahill was formerly a District Ranger and he knew Cumor, being one of the Forest Service employees who died. The Cats were coming in for refueling at that time. This is in the morning when Tim McMullen arrived. They are in the vicinity of the water tank. By 12 noon, all the Cats had been refueled. Dale DeLoach, another Forest Service employee who died and Tim McMullen were told to take their Cats and control a sloopover just above the water tank.

DeLoach took a Cat over by the power lines after completing this job. Ames' Cat, to which Tim was assigned, was there and they did work on a couple of sloopovers. Cumor and Klepperich were still near the water tank. Klepperich was the overall Cat boss for the four Cats. Cumor and Klepperich came in about 30 minutes later. Ames was told to travel below on a road below the power line. This leap-frogged Ames into the front of the other bulldozers that were now working down from point H. At 5 PM they were on the middle ridge which in referring to Attachment 2 would be on the ridge marked J. They were cutting toward the Santa Monica Canyon. About 6:30 to 7, all Cats came out on the top and I assume this to be point D, Attachment 2. The down canyon wind was observed and mentioned. They were told of the relief shift by Klepperich. Tim was concerned about the fire situation and did not want to stay out until midnight as had been discussed concerning the refueling of the Cats. Ames had been out since approximately 2:30 in the morning and this meal that they were now eating at this time had been the first meal. Tim says this meal was about 7:20 PM. Doug Campbell and Jerry Berry came in in the helicopter and talked of burning out in the night if the tie-in to the Santa Monica was possible and completed. At about 8 PM, they moved to the middle ridge (this is Tim and his operator Ames) to observe the fire. They had a radio, but the radio would not transmit. He saw Klepperich shortly after this. The fire was moving somewhat down the canyon. There was some down-canyon wind. Tim mentioned to Klepperich that he felt it unsafe for them to stay in 'til midnight. Klepperich said that it would be safe until 9:30 and this bears out and confirms with the statements from Hayden concerning his 7:30 PM call to Klepperich. Tim disagreed with this 9:30 PM, but in a passive manner. The fire was moving east and downhill. Klepperich told Tim to take Ames and the dozer and to start working out on the Edison Road cleaning the grass off, getting rid of the burnable materials on it, so this puts Ames first (in front) in doing this work. This would be heading out from the bottom of the ridge adjacent to the Santa Monica Canyon coming back out. Cumor's tractor was following (second). Tim's radio wouldn't work and as they became concerned somewhat as they worked along this road he had walked back to the ridge (this was the last ridge

of the Santa Monica Canyon) to discuss the situation with Klepperich. Ames had thought that possibly they were already blocked by fire coming over the fireline. Klepperich said no, that they weren't, that the fire had not come over the firebreak and to keep working rather than turning back or walking out. Klepperich again said to work the road out. There was some discussion concerning possibly leaving about 9, so at 9 o'clock, Ames, the operator, quits working, picks up his blade and starts walking the Cat out. Tim recommended that they move out at 9 PM and it was agreed that they would do so. Cumor had passed his radio to Tim at their evening meal. The radio would receive, but would not transmit. He didn't receive any calls at all after he took it. At the 8 o'clock talk when Tim had walked back along the ridge to speak to Klepperich, Klepperich made assumption on the nightbreezes that would be favorable to them and this was when it was decided to stay until 9 to 9:30. There were no maps available to the Cat organization. At this point, Tim has pretty well completed his restructuring of things and the discussion goes to general, so the following will be identified as spoken by individuals--

Hayden: There was no communication (coordination with CDF that is) in the form of radio nets. Coordination had to be on a face to face basis.

Tim: Ames wanted to go back to an old fireline break east which he knew of, since he had worked in this country earlier.

Hayden: Jerry Berry, the night line boss, and Ed Masonheimer had maps when they arrived as the evening shift. These maps appeared to be correct in relation to what had been done and where the fire was. (The discussion between Hayden, Berry, and Masonheimer did not mention specific safety problems, though downslope winds had started).

Hayden: About 9 to 9:30 as he traveled into the fire camp, he heard Jerry Berry on the radio saying, "We should do something--we'd better do something--we have to do something," and this was when the call went in for the ambulances. He said that Klepperich appeared to be in trouble.

Hayden asked if they needed directions for the ambulances. Apparently they did not, but Hayden did see the ambulance as it brought two injured out. All four bodies at the lower tractor, that is tractor #2 (this is the second tractor and where all the fatalities were). The two injured were first approached and greeted by Jerry Berry and Ed Masonheimer.

## A Visit to the Accident Scene by the Investigating Team

This group that visited the accident scene was composed of the team members, Tim McMullen, Doug Hayden, Clem Crouch, and Byron Carniglia of the California Division of Forestry. This visit was following our talk with Hayden and McMullen.

The scene of the accident is best shown on Attachment 3. After getting the background as stated earlier by Hayden and Tim McMullen, the team proceeded to walk along the fireline which is on the ridge top, best shown on Attachment 2, Point A-H, over to the power lines, which are on the ridge. What we saw was dozer #1 at the fallen steel tower in front and the higher of all bulldozers; however, this is not the highest point on that ridge. And then behind it, downhill on the firebreak is dozer #2. Dozer #3 isn't really visible from here but it is located as indicated on Attachment 3, some 500 to 600 feet from dozer #2, and of course at the bottom of that canyon. Tim explained to us as we had traveled over to the accident scene, that all the Forest Service personnel had had the flameproof shirts; however, they were wearing personal jackets over them and in some cases Forest Service Cruiser coats. As we approached dozer #1, it was seen that the steel tower carrying some lines had crumpled under the heat. This is pictured in Attachment 3; however, by this time, by the time of the investigation, the Edison Power Company had cut a portion of that tower off in order to come in and put up a wooden pole which has already been done. The tower completely blocked the road at one time after the fire. This is not clearly visible on either of the photos. However, this does indicate the temperature that was reached at the location of dozer #1. Dozer #1 was less than 35 feet from the tower. The roadway or the fireline at this point was approximately 30 feet wide. It's approximately 150 to 200 feet from dozer #1 to dozer #2. Then behind dozer #2 as is shown, an attempt to dig in by dozer #2.

We do not know whether they felt that the soil was too hard at this point or that they moved off for some other reason. It certainly did appear hard; however, this was a brand new D-7 Dozer and we doubt that this is the reason that they gave up on their attempt to dig in here. As can be seen, this was actually the widest point in their fireline and probably would have been a far more desirable place to have dug in. However, for some reason, they moved forward approximately 100 feet and actually did a slight job of digging in - apparently pushing about two good dozer blades of dirt forward - moved the tractor forward and then got under it.

The early arrivals on the scene had tape-roped off the fatal scene and had located the locations of each of the bodies. It was not identified as to which body was at which of these locations. Three of them were under dozer #2. One body was approximately 15 feet up the fireline and to the right of the dozer. This body was slightly off the edge of the road.

There were remnants of various personal articles at the accident scene such as eyeglasses. There were three 1-gallon canteens underneath the dozer - with the bodies. There were juice cans - five of them empty and one still full. Apparently they had used all these liquids wetting themselves down, etc., as they prepared for the heat. Dozer #1 had the two survivors - both Cat operators on it at the time the heat hit them. It was a D-8 Caterpillar. The motor was still running and the lights burning when the rescuers arrived. It had three 1-gallon canteens on the dozer when we investigated the scene. These contained approximately 2-1/2 gallons of water. A Forest Service flashlight was lying beside the seat and still worked. The light has various kinds of rubber and elastic bands on it such as go around the hard hats. These were not burned or melted in any way. The foam rubber on the tractor seats had been exposed by use, but did not burn; however, a tool box on the left side of the seat had a lunch sack in it from lunch and this did burn. The heat inside this tool box was hot enough to burst a can of orange jell at the pull tab--in other words this was a self opening type of can. At this point someone asked the question about the Regional policy on issuing fire shelters. Jim James said that fire shelters are supposed to be issued to Cat skimmers but optional by Forest. Down at dozer #2, where the fatalities occurred, one of the men had faced the ground and had pulled his coat up over his head. This, of course, was flammable and did burn. The fire was hot enough to burn the accessories off the flashlights, some of the straps off of the canteens, and some of the knapsacks made of canvas. Tim McMullen who worked closely with the Inyo crew had said as he looked over some of the debris, that those were DeLoach's prescription glasses. There was some melting on the plastic ear part of these glasses. There was a neckerchief present which apparently had been wet as it was barely scorched. There was a chapstick from which all the chapstick had melted or burned. The paint melted on the left side of the tractor to some extent. There was certainly more heat and more melting on this than on tractor #1.

DeLoach was fire bossing tractor #2. The investigation team went downhill to the location of dozer #3 which is as we said earlier, some 500 to 600 feet away. It ran backwards without the operator from the vicinity of dozer #2. The tractor never turned over. It stopped at the edge of the Edison Road. The area burned after the tractor ran down the hill and as we saw considerable amount of unburned brush on a hitch on the rear of the tractor. According to Tim, this tractor should have been first on the hill crest in accordance as they had been lined up working the Edison Road before he and Ames left on their way out. Later, it was explained by the injured operators in the hospital when interviewed how the shift in position came about. The lights on tractor #3, at least the switch, was in the "on" position when we investigated it. This was a cable-operated dozer blade. The cable was snapped with one end still in the shive. An engineer by the name of Dennis Haines has driven up to the investigation team on Edison Road at this time and he gives us an insight into the situation. The operator of dozer #3 is Gerald Hotchkiss.

He was last in line. He bailed off the tractor and ran ahead to the others. He did not set the brakes, according to Dennis Haines, as related to him by Gerald's father, for this reason--his hands were so badly burned that he couldn't. Haines is an engineer on the road crew on the local Forest. Gerald Hotchkiss, operator #3, contracts to the Forest Service, with a back hoe from time to time. Cumor was fire bossing Cat #3. Tim took us to the middle ridge as we refer to it, and this is visible as ridge J on Attachment 2, and discussed their construction of this fireline which deadends. And from the vantage point he discusses the fire. They had worked a fireline on this middle ridge and connected it back west to the fireline coming off from under the power line. They had attempted to probe across the small canyon to the main Santa Monica ridge but were unable to do so. On Attachment 2, at point J, they had gone down the middle ridge getting on to the Edison Road, traveling along it to a point that they could come up the main ridge above Santa Monica Canyon. Here they had tried exploratory routes between C and D, to hook west across that canyon to the middle ridge. They were unable to do this. They worked the line on top of the main ridge above Santa Monica Canyon, from C to D. He then talked about their traveling out after they had done these various jobs over on the ridges. He estimates himself and Ames at point F on Attachment 2 at 9 PM. After this, it spotted to the left of this point which would be south at probably a time when the three other dozers had arrived at point F.

Note: This seems to be the best coordination the investigating team can get on when the spotting actually occurred to the left or south of point F. As comes out later, when the three tractors were coming out the Edison Road and reached point F, there was some discussion among them as to whether to go the Edison Road as Ames had done or to go up the firebreak. The tractor boss, Klepperich, said that they should go up the firebreak because they had built it and they knew it was a good firebreak and also because of the hose-lay on top of that area. Klepperich had seen CDF tankers at point H earlier in the evening and apparently thought they were still there. So it was determined as they sat at point F that it would be wise to go up the firebreak rather than up the uncleaned Edison Road that basically follows the canyon bottom. During the time that the three dozers are sitting at point F, radio communication to them was attempted by Jesse Luna. This communication was never completed. It seems that this was the time when the crew and particularly Klepperich really recognized that they were in serious trouble. Yet it seems that he did not attempt to radio out according to his bulldozer operator when interviewed in the hospital.

Further comments concerning tractor #3 and the broken cable--there was some speculation at this point by the investigation team that this

tractor malfunctioned causing it to be evacuated and abandoned. However, the injured in the hospital disallowed this, in that he was literally burned off that tractor by a sheet of flame occurring at the time the tractor was out of gear and he was unable to get it in gear to move out of the heat so he had to abandon it at that point. The cable was definitely not broken in that he had been using the blade just before that and was carrying the blade at that time. The cable must have sheared as the tractor ran backward, uncontrolled, down the mountain.

## The Interview with the Surviving Dozer Operators

The two injured operators are Gerald Hotchkiss and Leonard Kaiser. Leonard is referred to as Red. Dean Qualls, Safety Officer, went to the Cottage Hospital in Santa Barbara to speak with these gentlemen about the fire. The doctor had given permission to do this. The two men were in the same room together, in isolation, in an intensive care ward. One visitor at a time was permitted to go in. The two men appeared to be in good spirits. They seemed to be strong and certainly able to carry on an interview. They were watching a ball game at the time. This was on Sunday following their experience on Thursday night. The face of Gerald was burned. There were no bandages on his face, but a great deal of medication. The facial burns appeared as if they could possibly go either way in leaving scars. Red appeared to have had less facial burns. Of course, Gerald was on tractor #3 and had suffered a rather serious burning before he abandoned his tractor. The two men were, as has been said before, in adjacent beds and therefore the conversation of the interview ranged back and forth between the two. I introduced myself and told them who I was and my interest in establishing various points concerning the accident and why the accident investigation team was there.

Kaiser spoke first. He says he asked Klepperich if they shouldn't get out of there. Klepperich stated that a lookout was up on the hill keeping them advised and that there was plenty of time and he wanted to blade the Edison Road coming back out. He finally decided that they didn't have enough time and that they'd better lift their blades and come on out. Hotchkiss, Ames and myself were sent to the bottom of the ridge which adjoins Santa Monica Canyon and we were to start working the road out (point C to F). Ames was pretty concerned at this time and thought the fire had probably already jumped the fireline, so his swamper, Tim McMullen went back up the ridge to speak to Klepperich, since his radio wouldn't work, expressing concern about the fire location. Apparently Klepperich could see over to the fire and he again said that the lookouts were up there. But, anyhow, McMullen came back and said to blade the grass and debris off the road. This was very dangerous because this is a side cut road - just a narrow road - and the banks are steep with a lot of dust and it was dark. We just had the U-type blades on and we couldn't angle them and therefore we had to keep running our dozer up to the edge of the banks. Before getting to point F, Hotchkiss stopped to speak with Ames. Ames said we ought to pull out - we ought to get on out of here. Gerald said, "Well, he guessed he would wait on the boss man and the other two dozers." Klepperich and the other dozers came on. At this time Ames had already taken the Edison Road and was going out of sight. Klepperich told Hotchkiss that they wouldn't take the Edison Road because there was a hoselay up on the fireline and that they had built the fireline and that it was a good firebreak. As they started up the hill, someone said, "Park the dozers side by side for protection."

someone else said, "no, let's go ahead and get out of here." As they had lined up side by side, and as they started to pull out, Gerald's tractor which had been in front now waited for the others to pass by and before he could get his in gear to move out, a sheet of flame hit him, burning him pretty badly on the face and hands. He couldn't get his tractor in gear quickly enough to move on, so he jumped from his tractor and ran ahead to tractor #1 which was Kaiser's tractor. He got on it and stayed with it until the fire burned them off the seat. They had to change positions many times, he pointed out, during the heat of the flames.

Kaiser: To the right of us, it had burned partially slightly earlier, that is, it had not burned completely. The heat from this fire that we were now caught in restarted that which was on our right. The Forest boys sure got their wires crossed on when it was safe. Klepperich said they, meaning the lookouts, were keeping him posted. When they had eaten their supper about 7 o'clock, they (meaning that the people up on the vantage point) told them to move off the ridge.

Cumore jumped off of tractor # 3 when the tractors had all lined up. This is the reason he wasn't on the tractor with Hotchkiss when the sheet of flame hit him. Al considered digging in.

Hotchkiss: The fire was coming up behind and he couldn't get it in gear. The tractor was rolling before he completely jumped off of it - that is, rolling backwards. He ran up to the D-7 which is tractor #2. He saw his swamper, Cumor, and Hotchkiss told him he was burned. The Forest Service swamper said, "You're O. K. and things are going to be alright - we're going to dig in." Hotchkiss looked forward and saw Kaiser's dozer ahead. He says in a matter of minutes it was like a fire in a forge. He was speaking at this time about them having gone as far as they could on Kaiser's tractor and having stopped and gotten off of it. It was very hard to find a place cool enough. He layed up to the dozer blade on the back side and tried to go to sleep. He finally saw Kaiser and Kaiser got the canteen and then another blast of heat came. Red had to leave the canteen because of the flame.

Interviewer: I asked why he stopped the tractor where he did. This is the lead tractor #1.

Kaiser: "I stopped because of the flame. I drove it as far up as I could. There was fire behind us. I pushed as far into the flame as possible. Did not know when the tower fell. Did not see the tower at all before or after. Klepperich wanted to dig in about where the D-7 was but there wasn't anything to dig in with. Needed to get out of the path of the heat - that's what I did."

Interviewer: I had asked whether the power line falling across the road had been cause for him to stop and he mentioned that he hadn't seen the towers at all. He had stopped the tractor about 12 feet from one of the towers - very close to it. And by further explanation they were probably within 150 feet from an area that had had an earlier slop-over.

Hotchkiss: Did not know whether they had any radio contact on the way out (this was in response to a question from me). (Explaining further) When they told us to come out they talked about down draft winds and advised us to get out. This was when we were on the furthest point. Klepperich, however, told us that we would work the road out - that we had plenty of time.

Interviewer: Note to files: (I wish to interject that this is the only time anyone has reported that a radio transmission contained such weather information from the observation point. The weather was discussed by the crews on the Cats as borne out by other interviewees. However, this is the only person who makes specific mention of it.)

Kaiser: This doesn't make sense on a 15 foot wide road - it's no good for a fireline.

Interviewer: Note to files: (He's referring to the instruction to work the Edison Road on the way out to widen it as a firebreak.)

Hotchkiss: We wasted an hour on that road. It was dangerous - we couldn't see. Klepperich knew Ames went out the Edison Road. (Gerald wanted to go that way but Klepperich argued that there was a hoselay up at the head of the fireline - they had built the fireline and they knew it was good.) "Red and I ran neck and neck in second and third gear with our tractors."

Kaiser: "Supposed to be lookouts up there - didn't do the job. We could have gone out the back way, but Klepperich did not want to."

Hotchkiss: Jimmy Ames was upset with Tom. (Hotchkiss said he thought it was stupid to go up the steep ridge, but it was a firebreak). Jimmy Ames thought at one point when he was still with them down on the Edison Road that the fire had already crossed the firebreak. But then learned that this was mistaken when they traveled around a curve and could get a better view of their firebreak. They learned that the fire was on the ridge north of there. At this point, Ames and Hotchkiss talked of going out the back way. He saw the fire shoot across the Edison Road to the south when they were at about Point F on the photograph. This was when Klepperich became concerned enough to tell them to get out immediately.

Kaiser: When Klepperich left my tractor to go back to the second tractor, he didn't take the radio with him.

Hotchkiss: (In response to a question by the interviewer.) "I left the blade on the ground. There was yellow and white flame everywhere. The tractor was moving backwards. I was burned as I ran past - as I got off. I ran past the D-7. Everyone seemed to be there. They were going to dig - they said I was fine. I was yelling to them and they stopped and looked me over. Then I ran ahead to Red's tractor." Smalley and some fellow called Jerry worked with us until the water tank changeover about 11 AM. The Forest Service swampers gave us instructions as they worked with us in the afternoon (and this question is in response to a question asked by the interviewer).

(In response to question asked.) "No safety instruction for emergency action."

Interviewer: (Question concerning work hours.)

Hotchkiss: From 2 to 3 AM until taken out that night about 11.

Kaiser: ... came on duty about 10 AM. Lunches were provided but they didn't get time to eat them until about 7 PM. They said they got short on water a little.

Hotchkiss: "Cat bosses should have been better informed. Seemed to lack in knowledge of the job. Didn't know the escape route. They should have. These guys are not knowledgeable about what the Hell is going on. Jimmy Ames tried to tell them to get out."

Kaiser: "The Forest Service men should have known the other way out."

This concludes the interviews with the hospitalized injured.

## Discussion with California Division of Forestry Witnesses

These two witnesses were around on the evening of the tragedy. Their names are Jerry Tipton and J. T. or Jack Couste. They are from the Riverside office known as Region 6. Couste was the night line boss on the area. Jerry Tipton had a pumper contingent. This night shift on the 7th of October, arrived between 6:30 and 7:00 PM - maybe closer to 6:30. The Division had two section bosses - ten pumpers with two pumper bosses and Forest Service man on the side to work as liaison. Jack Couste understood that this was a Forest Service line with CDF to help out with equipment they had. The CDF had separate fire camp but did not have the Romero base camp plans. Jack Couste was the line boss for a given area. The dozers were not CDF dozers but belonging to the Forest Service - at least under Forest Service contract. Jack had two divisions under him including the one where the fatal accidents occurred. The CDF Division boss and Division #2 - that is above the water tank - was Welsher Cats working for the U. S. Forest Service. "Berry and Masonheimer were a sector team from the U. S. Forest Service with the CDF subject to their direction." Jack Couste assumes that they had a Cat boss. Jack talked to Jerry Berry about the efforts of the dozers. Berry had ideas of CDF taking hand crews into the rocky canyons where the dozers couldn't go. Jack did not care to put his people into the area at that time. This was about 6:30 PM. This was discussed with Berry and Berry concurred it was unsafe for hand crews. Jack judged it as unsafe because of less mobility of men and the previous day's experience with the winds. Crews were mopping up around the water tanks and waiting for the evening meal at this time. The question was asked of Jack Couste: "Would you have left your tractors in there?"

Couste said: "We were concerned and with hindsight probably not." He further adds: "There was no night weather report from CDF. Berry had a report verbally which mentioned 50% humidity and gusts of 25 to 40 mph at the upper levels." There was discussion with Berry about 8:30 PM, and of course the fire blew out about 9:20. Tipton went over to the power line with the 500 gallon pumpers about 8:30. This is the area shown on Attachment 2 as B to H. The CDF pumpers had been at the observation point A where McMullen spoke of an early afternoon slopover. Berry went over with Tipton and talked about burning out. Jerry Berry, Jesse Luna, Masonheimer and Tipton apparently were at the slopover point under the power line, which is also an excellent observation point, approximately at 9 PM, perhaps a little before. Spotting had begun on the fire and the fire had begun moving considerably at this time. The CDF people then explained about the trip out with the bulldozers. Dozer #3 as shown on Attachment 3, was in the rear. This was the one operated by Gerald Hotchkiss. As the dozers went from point F to point H on Attachment 2, they would have to stop and let spots burn out before they could proceed. Couste guesses that #3 dozer was purposely kicked out of gear to coast backwards out of the heat blast and then couldn't stop it.

The rear dozers apparently would get caught in a hot spot and have to coast backwards and then the Cats would have to wait for cooling off. At 8:30 PM the Edison Company said their lines were dead. This was reported to CDF. The dozer #1 apparently had to stop for heat, and from the falling towers as surmised earlier. It was 30 to 40 minutes before the U. S. Forest Service could go in to their injured men. Apparently the injured stayed at dozer #1 until picked up. Dozer #4, the one that came out operated by Ames, came out before the last pumper left the observation point and returned toward the water tanks. As dozer #4 peaked out on top of the ridge, the other three dozers were coming up the steep area on the fire line closer to point F. They were having to stop frequently. Tipton was the first CDF person back at the fallen tower and the fatal scene. They had watched the Cats as they got in trouble. There were about 100 people on water tank hill around 7:30 with CDF. These two CDF men, Couste and Tipton did not hear anyone say, "Get those Cats out," at any time. Couste feels he and Jerry mutually agreed that it was getting unsafe for men on foot.

Jack had gone to the site thinking that they would burn out the dozer line. He decided against it after seeing the situation. Two fire districts are involved on this fire and here he gets into an explanation of the county fire organization, the State Division of Forestry, etc. He commented that there were just too many fire chiefs in the field - they couldn't get decisions and here he's referring to the night before (October 6.) The Santa Barbara and Ventura Counties and the city of Santa Barbara, as well as other community organizations were involved on the first night. So they went to the Santa Barbara fire station at about 4 AM on Thursday morning. The decision was made that the fire chief would handle the structures and the resource agencies should plan to keep it off the valley floor. On the night of the 7th, it was Couste's understanding it was all Forest Service responsibility.

The following comments were made after the investigating team asked if there was "Anything else?"

Tipton: Who was in charge of the dozers and what is his qualification? Who does the USFS put with the dozers and what are their qualifications? (Interjection by author: Tipton was expressing some concern of two things: (1) How did these dozer assignments come to be made, and (2) as is later revealed, he's driving at the question of qualifications and wishing that the agencies could jointly have common standards for qualification.)

Jack: Communications between swampers - how was it? Did all the swampers have radios? Was there an observer on the hill communicating with them.

Tipton: He feels someone with judgement should have been with these dozers. Did this guy with the dozers have the authority to change plans?

Jack: "On rented equipment, should you put a highway contractor dozer operator on a mountainside. Did they have any experience with fire fighting and rough mountain terrain? What Forest Service equipment operators - would they have gotten into such a predicament? "

Tipton: Again, on qualifications, we use different criteria. Northern California uses one criteria versus southern California. We can't judge the validity of our red cards within our agency as well as between agencies.

Jack : When we entered the site, he would and did think the Cat boss was somewhere other than with them and with communications.

## Interview of Ed Masonheimer and Jesse Luna

These two men were division boss and sector cat boss respectively, on the night of October 7. We interviewed these fellows at 11:30 AM on October 10. These two men had left the fire the next day because of their emotional reaction to the fatalities of the night before. Written statements of theirs are also included.

Masonheimer: He had a map and an assignment sheet. His assignment said that he would have seven tractors, bosses and a sector team. He met with Berry and never left him and never actually took over. It was dark when he got there. He left plans and Campbell and he made a helicopter reconnaissance. They stopped on the ridge east or southeast of Santa Monica. There was poor visibility. They couldn't see a great deal. That night, after he had gone back to the base camp, he left the base camp and drove in using headlights. He expressed difficulty in getting some of his equipment together for the shift. At the water tank, he met with Jerry. It was very dark then. He met Hayden and went to the vantage rocks or observation point. The wind was beginning to shift. The fire, however, was way up on the hill and presented no particular danger. Jerry introduced them to the California Division of Forestry personnel and they discussed the situation. It was a discuss and rediscuss situation. He was trying to watch the fire as it had become a downward trend. He stated that he suggested getting the tractors out then, fuel, change shifts and hold the tractors until they saw how things were going. This was well over an hour before the accident. He says he turned to Jerry Berry, Doug Hayden and Jesse Luna and asked if they agreed on his suggestion on the tractors. They did. Jerry pointed out a fuel break by the water tank. A Cat was coming on duty and Don Metcalf was to start in east from the water tank. This would be along the Carpentaria fuel break. Masonheimer was not sure of the communications between Doug Hayden and Klepperich. He thinks Hayden said something like this, "I'll take care of the communication with Klepperich." Masonheimer was talking with other people at this moment and was distracted from close attention of what the radio communication between Hayden and Klepperich was. When Hayden left, Masonheimer thought that the tractors at the bottom were to do a little more before leaving and coming out. At that time they started over to the observation point, B to H, and he noted the tractors had started out. They were probably there for a duration of five minutes and then they saw the situation and hurried back - probably 15 minutes getting back. They tried to contact the bulldozers located at point F on the photograph, for probably 15 minutes. He thought it may have been some 15 minutes after the radio contact with Klepperich by Hayden before they left to walk over to the observation point. The slop-over at B happened as they were going over to the point for a look. When they were over there, the wind became very unstable. "When we crossed the Edison Road, the smoke had flattened out in the basin." Several spots were occurring on the ridge

(and evidently, as an interjection, he means the ridge above the fire-break). The tractors seemed to be at about point F. "Here I decided to tell them to get out. I ran back to the car and tried to call for about 15 minutes, but was never able to make contact. We pulled out because of the local fire heat. This means that the drainage to the south of Edison Road had fired up." There was no known communications with Klepperich - he could have gone out the back way. The tractors had stopped at point F for over 15 minutes, according to John (unknown last name - another relief Cat operator). "The next time I saw them, there was three of them going up the fire line toward point B."

Hayden was to transmit, "Come out now for refuel, change." Masonheimer had asked the other fellows - what do you think about it? Doug Hayden said, "I'll tell them." Masonheimer says he was uneasy but felt they had more than adequate time to get out. The first cat had less than 100 yards to go to get out according to Masonheimer.

The weather report called for the following at lower elevations; (however, he doesn't know what lower elevation means) - humidity up to 50%, winds light, expect slight down canyon winds. Jerry Berry says that the humidity was going up to 50% and there should be no problems. Ames' tractor came out and Jerry talked to Ames before the fatal accident occurred. When they started up the hill at point F, Masonheimer was trying to contact them by radio.

Jesse Luna interjects: "A spot occurred way below them, but was no immediate threat to them."

Masonheimer continued: "Jerry specifically said there is no real problem; if it gets tight they can go out the other way, meaning the Edison Road." This was when Masonheimer was trying to call them while the tractors sat at point F.

Masonheimer: I took the radio from tractor #1. It was at the driver's seat on the right side. This radio is the telephone handle type which couldn't be heard unless you held it to your ear when on a Cat.

Jesse Luna interjects: Tractor #3 went off before the Ames' tractor came out on the mountain to us here at the top.

Masonheimer: I guess they decided it was too slow and didn't want it to block their way if they had to go back. Don't know when this steel tower fell. It was up when we were out there with the tankers. The number 1 dozer took off hell bent for leather during a lull in the fire. We don't know why the first tractor stopped. Tractor #2 kept coming after #1 stopped. Then #2 backed down. Maybe a sheet of flame caused them to stop.

A question was asked by the team: How did Gerald, the operator of

tractor #3 get up to #1? Answer: All three tractors stopped midway up, let #3 loose, stayed a while and then went forward. As I entered Bakersfield, traveling back after we left the fire, it dawned on me that both injured were the skimmers. Ben Lyon and I were the first ones there and saw the two injured. One was on the left under the tractor and he turned his head toward us as we walked up with the light. The other man was standing between the blade and the Cat. I went to tractor #2 and one man was under the left arm, face down and alive. Someone gave him a drink. Another was under the rear of the Cat - another under the front. Both were dead. Cat #2 was shut off and had to be started to lift out the one under the arm and get the two out from under.

Masonheimer: (continuing) I saw no fire shelters.

Luna interjects: Two catskinners had no flameproof shirts. I feel that if shelters were mandatory, the men could have survived.

Question: Any question as to who was in charge?

Answer by Luna: I felt that I had not really taken over as sector boss as he (Jerry Berry) was still saying operating things. I'm out there to handle the action details on an operation.

Masonheimer: We were to get two southern California hotshot crews which don't need Forest Service supervision. Luna would use his staff for lookout and scouts.

Luna: "Nobody every said, get them out now..." "Division bosses should stick with the overall picture."

Masonheimer: I felt uneasy, but the problem wasn't obvious. Nobody voiced a strong concern. I said I wanted those tractors out for administrative purposes and to watch it (the fire behavior).

Question: Who was in charge of the Cats?

Answer: That was from the day shift, and I'm not really sure except Hayden. Apparently Hayden did not have a map. We looked at Jerry's and we discussed the alternatives. Jerry was there to orient me to the CDF people and the terrain. I never felt that I assumed command.

At this point, Jerry Berry came up to the place we were interviewing these two and the questioning of them was dropped. The question had just been asked what things did Berry do that caused you not to assume command, but this question was never answered. These two men remained as Jerry Berry was interviewed. They did not make any interjections in a rather lengthy and sometimes emotional interview. As a matter of fact, at one point in the Berry interview, we stopped for a brief lunch before continuation.

Interview with Jerry Berry - 1 PM October 10

Question: What was your plan of action?

Jerry Berry: "I went on shift by looking at the fire from the helicopter with Doug Campbell, the day line boss. This was about 4 PM. He told me what he had in mind. I took over at 6 PM. We landed at 4 PM and I talked to Nelson who was with the Cats and one of the Forest Service swampers about possible line locations.

"The tractors were Forest Service. Line manning was up to CDF. The plan was to try to tie the edge of the fire into the Santa Monica Canyon. There was much indirect line and I knew it had to be fired out. I went back to the base camp to activate the plans for the evening. Planned various divisions'tactics. Joint effort with CDF was critical and Ed Masonheimer was to be liaison officer with CDF. I went ahead and met with Campbell. Masonheimer was to coordinate these Cats with the CDF effort. No discussion as to what to do with the indirect line business. Just to tie the line in with the creek. After meeting Hayden and Masonheimer, we talked quite a while about the tractors and what to do with them. Hayden wanted to get them out for refueling. CDF didn't want to go in, so we decided to pull the Cats out. I heard part of the radio communication with Klepperich. Doug Hayden was to tell them to come out which would get them out of there and fuel them. I didn't talk to Doug after he called Klepperich. They were not told that we were getting concerned. I personally felt concerned, but did not object to the time delay to do more work. Ames wasn't out of the canyon when the conference took place and I went to the observation point with Masonheimer and Jack Couste. From there we went back to tell the Cats to get on out. I wanted them to dig in where they were. I talked with Tim McMullen, the survivor, when he came out. I asked him about the radio, thinking he had the only radio down there. Ames, the dozer operator, had topped out on Edison Gap about five minutes before the accident. Tim had been cleaning the road and was ahead of the others. The decision to pull the Cats out was being made but I did not enter in on it. We took CDF 4 by 4 out to the observation point. There we watched what was going on and decided against firing. We left the 4 by 4 there working on some old spots. About this time in walking back we knew we had trouble. Heard Ames' tractor in the Edison saddle, but on top we saw the three coming up the fire line. Told Masonheimer to try to reach the tractor boss by radio. On our ridge was a spot which probably made the Cats think their rear escape, that is, Edison Road, was blocked. Shortly, several spots occurred and I wanted them to ring and develop a safety zone. Instead, they broke and ran with the Cats. At this time, I called the camp and told them we were in trouble. Tractors proceeded up the break. Jerry tried to contact them and to instruct them to dig in but there was no way to make it. The drainage had to go. The men in the lead Cat were alive, because they made it to the burned area. The lead Cat pushed into the

fire and backed off at least two or three times. The second Cat never stayed with it as long. I ordered the ambulances as soon as the tractors started up the hill. There was a down canyon wind beginning gently. While I was looking at the line with the State, the wind picked up, but was never over 15 mph. That was enough. An easier escape route was out the other way - out Edison Road. At three or four o'clock Doug Campbell decided the power line break strategy thinking they could hold the retardent line above. I went with Klepperich above onto the high ridge above Santa Monica Canyon and spotted some flat benches to work into Santa Monica Creek. (The question was asked of him - any discussion with Klepperich?) His answer: Overall plan was to tie into the Santa Monica Canyon as high as possible. I know of no discussion from Klepperich about the way out. We took the scout (meaning a vehicle) Klepperich and I, and drove to the drop in the Santa Monica Canyon. My own feelings - I didn't see no way we were getting ourselves into trouble. I got back into the Romero Fire Camp about 7 PM. Klepperich wasn't nervous. His only problem during the PM was where do we go from here? Klepperich wasn't complaining. His only comment was this - "If there's no relief, get us some chow and we'll be alright." Klepperich couldn't communicate with his Cats except by voice contact. Klepperich was carrying his radio while I was with him. Jimmy Ames was clear out in front. He knew the country - he was born and raised here. We first cleaned the Carpentaria fuel break to Santa Monica Canyon. Then the fire layed down so Doug's strategy changed to hold up out water tank ridge. I wasn't so keen on this strategy, because I thought Doug Campbell was too optimistic. That air attack line above would hold. I knew the power lines were dead; I'm not sure Klepperich knew this. Ames came down the Edison Road as he went in. The other operators did not go in this way and of course you go back out the way you know. But they all knew the road was there. I didn't explain escape routes to Klepperich and I doubt if anyone else did. (In response to a question): I doubt seriously if we could have held the canyon tie in.

"To the question of what else: Well, communications weren't very good, plus the fact that on those Cats you can't hear a call on that kind of radio. The new fire Boise Cache communication setup that they got in there today is working fine. 7:30 seems to be the last communications with Klepperich."

The comment came out that the radios on the Los Padres are 18 years old.

End interview with Berry.

Interview with Doug Campbell - 9:30 PM October 10

Question: Tell us from the water tanks on, what happened.

Response: "The division was on a cooperative basis with CDF. Hayden was there. I don't particularly or readily recall the slopover. We had a firing job west of the water tanks and I was in the helicopter. Talked to Doug Hayden near the water tanks. I got planes and told them to pretreat the ridge between the water tanks and the power line. As a spot occurred over the ridge, they bombed it. They used three planes. The CDF wanted more drops on the slopovers before they would go down and work on it. So we did. The Cats turned the corner at the power line and changed the picture. I'm not sure of that time of day, but I normally come into plans about 2:30 PM and discuss the situation with plans. However, about that time the fire was top of the ridge along the water tank area. Before the Cats came down the power line ridge, I had it pretreated. The Cats scraped out one-half of it and I remember being a little bit aggravated that we wasted that money. I recommended to plans about 2:30 that we continue the new strategy and to tie into Santa Monica Creek. I talked to Bob Nelson on the ground. I was with Jerry Berry. Plans were to doze the line into the fork of the Santa Monica Creek as high up as possible - to tie in the upper head water with the air drop. Planned to angle off the Santa Monica Ridge onto a bench or a good sized spur ridge. I saw three or four Cats in there working and landed the helicopter. I told Bob Nelson which ridge to go up and generally how to angle in the Santa Monica forks. We reconnoitered from the air and it looked favorable. They did it as I proposed. Nelson said as soon as he got the Cats lined up he was leaving because of double shift. I talked to two lead Catskinners and asked where their swampers were and their radios. Bob stayed there (that is Nelson) and I came into Jerry and told him I would take Ed Masonheimer in to look at the country. We landed and discussed the strategy - how it would pinch the fire in the Santa Monica Creek for the night."

Question: What was the role of the CDF on that division?

Answer: "I worked with Hayden that day and I knew it was our only chance to hold it. Late that night I sat in the weather shack and studied the weather maps. Hayden wanted certain support items, but I considered it non-essential. Hayden said he wished CDF would get off the dime and fire this thing. They did fire that afternoon in evidently some of the areas that Hayden had spoken of. I formally proposed this change in strategy to the fire boss as we pretreated, so he knew of the plans and he accepted the strategy. On Wednesday night approaching the fire, I was apprehensive because of the transition funnel winds. People commented on the radio to watch out for the down-canyon runs. This comment was made several times. It didn't do this, which baffled me a bit. I talked to Nelson and Roberts about this the next afternoon.

"It just didn't run downhill Wednesday night. Thursday night not much was said on the radios about downhill runs. Someone did mention it on the air Thursday night - evidently about one time. To answer the question of what went wrong: Not being there, I don't know. Nelson and I heard about it after we went to bed and Nelson worried that it was his men that he'd been working with that day; however, we didn't know for sure. Ames and I communicated about our plan out there on the ground. On how to put the line in."

Question: Who was the division boss that day?

Answer: "I think Nelson kind of worked for Don Roberts who was the division boss. The next day Roberts and Nelson both were out there as division bosses. Nelson and Roberts agreed Roberts was boss on Friday. Hayden had liaison responsibility and could request additional equipment. Roberts was my division boss. Nelson was extending himself and was really trying to go."

Question: Who was the sector boss at 3 PM?

Answer: "Don't know. The tractor boss really reports to the division boss. In shift change, you either take charge and make it happen, or assume it will happen passively."

Question: Were there red flag warnings to you at mid afternoon?

Answer: "No. I figured four hours work for four dozers to do the entire job of bringing in that line to Santa Monica Creek. There was still no red flag. I was back at 6 PM with Masonheimer and the fire had not moved much. The rate of spread was slow. I made observations to that effect. It was past the heat of the day by then and it seemed everything would be in our favor."

End interview with Doug Campbell.

Statement of Jesse R. Luna

I was assigned as Sector Boss under Division Boss Ed Masonheimer for the night shift of October 7, 1971. There were no Sectors assigned on the Division at this time because we were on the front of the fire.

I was unable to get more than one radio for the Division before leaving camp. Trying to get more radios and obtain proper transportation delayed my departure from fire camp until about dark.

When we arrived near our assigned line, Division Boss Masonheimer and I met Line Boss Berry and Ranger Hayden. There was discussion about refueling the four cats working on the Division. We could see the cats from where we were at the time. Masonheimer wanted the cats pulled out right away. I understand that Ranger Hayden gave them the order by radio. Fire conditions at this time did not look favorable.

Masonheimer, Berry, and I went up the jeep trail to the powerline. About this time we all began to worry about the fix the cats were getting into. It was decided to return to our vehicles and radio the Cat Boss again and tell him to speed up and get out of there. Spot fires were starting ahead of the main fire above the cats.

When we got to the high point on the way back we saw spot fires in Santa Monica Canyon. At this point the fire behavior became really erratic.

When we got to the vehicles Masonheimer immediately got on the radio and tried to contact the Cat Boss. This was about 20 minutes after we left the powerline. About then is when we saw one cat head off the fire-line very fast down the hill. I don't think anybody could have been riding it.

The lead cat, up the ridge, seemed like he would make it out. The other cat was close behind. The lead cat stopped short of the towers and did not move any more. The lower cat started a backing action because there were flames between the cats.

In a short time the lower cat stopped backing down. At the same time, a large flame front came up the ridge toward the cat. There were spot fires now between us and the water tank. We decided to move back.

When we got back we tied in with Fire Boss Lyon. I was asked to get volunteers to go back in to the cats. When we got back there we helped take the victims out.

This statement was handwritten by  
Robert Irwin as dictated by Jesse R. Luna.

Statement of Edwin Masonheimer

The following is my statement of events and actions prior to and after the disaster which occurred on the Romero Fire, October 7, 1971.

My assignment was Division Boss on Division 6, and also Liaison Officer with the CDF in a joint effort to construct a fire line into and up Santa Monica Canyon.

My team was made up of one sector team and 7 tractor bosses with tractors, four of which were already on line during the day shift.

After receiving these instructions from plans I had a brief discussion with the Night Line Boss, Mr. Jerry Berry, and Day Line Boss, Mr. Doug Campbell, as to the plans and a helicopter recon prior to going on line for familiarization. Mr. Campbell and I flew near the area but could not recon as closely as we wanted to, because of air attack working in the area.

While I was on recon Sector Boss Jesse Luna was setting up transportation and gathering equipment needed for the shift.

There was a little problem in arranging our transportation, thus we did not leave fire camp until near dark.

I was to meet Mr. Berry at the green water tank near Santa Monica Canyon to become acquainted with CDF Fire Boss Good and Line Boss Green to coordinate our line efforts. I joined Mr. Berry and Ranger Doug Hayden at the water tank 20 to 30 minutes after dark. From that point we all went up the tank trail to tie in with the CDF people. Upon arrival with the CDF people I noticed a slight wind shift, to down canyon which we all discussed. At this time the four tractors involved were approximately 1 1/2 miles, by tractor line away. The fire was across a canyon and upslope from us. At this point we discussed shift change with the tractor bosses and operators. It was pointed out by Mr. Hayden the tractors would need fuel near midnight, which would require them to return to the water tank. With the increasing unstable wind conditions starting to occur I suggested we go ahead and pull the tractors out now for refueling and shift changes and to hold the equipment with us until the wind subsides or a definite change one way or the other. I asked Line Boss Berry, Ranger Doug Hayden and Sector Boss Luna if they agreed, which all did. Mr. Hayden said he would call Tractor Boss Klepperich and advise him. Tractor Boss Klepperich said O.K. --but he had a little more work he wanted to do before coming out. He said he would start out near 2100 (I'm not sure if that's the statement in full or not, as I was instructing some of my people at the same time). After that, Line Boss Berry released Mr. Hayden back to fire camp.

Line Boss Berry suggested we, along with CDF overhead walk over to the fire break already prepared by the tractors. About this time there was a little flare up on a slope over near the tractor line and the CDF people moved their pumpers over to it (the same direction we were going). After going 10-7 Mr. Berry, Mr. Lance and myself started walking down the tank trail towards the fire line. I think it was about this time I noticed the tractors were starting out. One was a few minutes ahead of the other three.

As we continued walking, we noticed the wind getting squirrelier then it would subside. The wind continued this action, steadily increasing its intensity. While at the start of the fire break, it was determined it would be rather doubtful we would be able to use this particular line as of the time involved getting the CDF crews to that point. (As I understood it they, the CDF crews, had not eaten yet.)

About half way back to the vehicle the wind started swirling and the convective column was starting to spread itself over the entire area dropping fire brands. I looked to see where the tractors were and they looked to be more than half way out. We hot-footed it back to the vehicle and tried numerous times to contact Mr. Klepperich about the situation that was developing. After failing to make contact by radio, Mr. Berry said he was going to try and contact them by voice. I continued trying to contact him by radio, without success.

Shortly after Mr. Berry returned asking if I had made contact with Mr. Klepperich and, I replied, "No."

By this time several spots had occurred below the tractors on both sides of the ridge and were making finger runs towards them. About this time they turned one tractor loose, I presume to make faster time. The two remaining cats waited a few minutes, again I presume to let a run settle down. At this point I ordered all my people to load up and move down to the water tank staging area.

Mr. Berry, Luna and myself stayed at our vantage point. As the finger-run slowed down the cats started up hill again. The wind slacked off and it looked as if they would make it out O. K. The lead cat was within 30 feet of the tower when it stopped. The other cat stopped about 100 yards behind, then started to slowly back down the hill again. About that time the wind started again and spots had occurred between us and the water tank. We left and went down to the water tank.

As we all got together at the water tank, Forest Fire Control Officer Ben Lyon and Forest Precaution Officer Dennis Ensign had arrived. Mr. Berry asked me if I would gather up some of my people to go back with him and Mr. Lyon. We gathered up first aid equipment and walked into the scene.

This is a 5 1/2 page hand written statement  
of Edwin W. Masonheimer.