



BLACKWATER FIRE AT 4:10 P.M. AUG 21, 1937

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ROCKY MOUNTAIN REGION
BULLETIN

Memorial Number
Blackwater Fire

U.S. Forest Service.

Denver, Colorado.



SUPPRESSION OF THE BLACKWATER FIRE

On the afternoon of August 20, at 3:35 p.m., while preparing for a pack trip, a report came from Pahaska that a smoke could be seen down river. A check on the location placed the origin of the smoke on Blackwater Creek. The afternoon was hot and dry, with the sun boiling down and no discernible wind.

Men from the Wapiti CCC Camp were immediately called and in less than twenty minutes were on their way to the fire,

The smoke was rising vertically in a slowly growing column. It apparently was crowning in a limited area, but was not moving appreciably. Upon reaching Blackwater Lodge 10 minutes later the smoke was boiling in every sense of the word and the fire was gaining headway up a densely timbered canyon to the east. The steepness of the canyons served as enormous flues and in less than an hour had burned to nearly 200 acres, almost completely incinerating the dense stands of Douglas Fir. At that time the temperature was 85°F. and the humidity 16 per cent.

After reaching the fire, 50 more men and two fire pumps were ordered. One small CCC crew had already arrived and was constructing line around the lower edge of the fire. Darkness was coming on and still the fire continued to crown out up the canyon to the east. Even at this time there was very little wind, but the tremendous currents of heat created by the fire itself sucked the flames on ahead.

On its initial run up the mountain side the fire had burned itself out on reaching what is now known as Trail Ridge, but had gained momentum to the south and was ravaging the canyons towards Coxcomb Mountain. The danger point at that time was that the fire, if it continued, would spot over the divide into the head of Blind Creek on the Elk Fork drainage. It still had approximately a mile to burn, but the crowning continued, causing spots far in advance.

At about 8:00 that evening I met Supervisor Sieker and after a definite plan of attack, he left to order additional men so that 150 men would be on the fire by daybreak. That night about 65 men were divided and construction of line advanced around the flank of the fire from Blackwater Creek each way. The fire pump on the west sector during the night held a dangerous section of line and prevented the spread up Blackwater Creek, embodying a basin of heavy timber.

Daylight saw the timbered draws, extending to the divide between Coxcomb and Double Mountains, burned and fire over on the Elk Park side with 120 men on the fire. The morning wind had blown the fire northeasterly up under Double Mountain. It had also crept over Trail Ridge into green timber and was burning slowly down hill. Foreman Glen Hill had worked on this line during the night and was advancing it easterly towards the rim rock. Following the run of the fire during the first night the "hot spot" shifted with the wind to this sector.

At 1:30 p.m. the first reinforcements of 50 men arrived from the Deaver CCC Camp. These men were sent to the west sector to continue line

construction and partially relieve the Yellowstone National Park crew who had been on since early morning. Shortly after came the Tensleep CCC Crew of 51 men under Ranger Post and assisted by Foremen Saban and Tyrrell.

Ranger Clayton was put in charge of the new sector, which extended from Trail Ridge northeasterly, and, with Post and his men, started up the ridge. In all sectors, except the latter, line construction was not hazardous.

Actual work on this fire line began about 3:15 p.m. A section was being built by a crew from the Bureau of Public Roads camp under Bert Sullivan, a Forest Service cooperator. Post and his crew proceeded on ahead of the Bureau men and began construction. Ranger Clayton had apparently surveyed the area as he advanced behind Post's men along the line already built. At a point of vantage he discussed the situation with Foreman Saban and Junior Assistant to Technician Hale of the Wapiti CCC Camp. Five or six enrollees were with Clayton, Saban and Hale at the time. Clayton was somewhat concerned about a "spot fire in the hole" as he described in a note to Post asking for additional men, since he was going to take available men down to get this spot fire.

Shortly after this note to Ranger Post, the wind began whipping back and forth fiercely driving the surface fires into the crowns. From Ranger Post's position, he quickly realized the seriousness of the situation, pulling all his men, he proceeded to what he considered a safe place, since he was unable to return along the fire line to Trail Ridge.

The exact happenings of Clayton and his men is somewhat uncertain. The enrollees with him were carrying back pack pumps and were apparently filling the pumps from a small stream in a canyon near the line when the fire overpowered them. Seven men, including Ranger Clayton, Foreman Saban, Junior Assistant to Technician Hale, and enrollees Gerdes, Griffith, Mayabb and Rodgers were found in this gulch. They were caught, presumably, about 3:45 P.M. Bevans, another enrollee was found within 60 feet of this gulch, badly burned, and later died in the hospital.

Meanwhile, Ranger Post and Foreman Tyrrell and Bert Sullivan, with other Bureau of Public Roads men, were stringing out of the fire line to a rocky point seemingly safe. Within a few minutes after reaching this point, the flames swept over and around them. Five men became unmanageable and charged through the fire, Patzke being the only one of these that survived, although receiving frightful burns, while Lea and enrollees Allen and Sherry were fatally burned. The other men withstood the heat as best they could. Those with ample clothing suffered the least burns. Some clothing became so hot they were torn off thinking it to be ablaze. Exposed flesh was burned unbearably. Some, scarcely able to bear the heat, stood up, only to be more seriously burned.

During the time the fire was on this rampage, I climbed Trail Ridge to contact Superintendent Wolcott, as I knew him to be near the origin of the spot fire that later proved to be fatal. Wolcott was

contacted on Trail Ridge, his men already out of the timber. Several men appeared higher up the ridge shouting to others along the line. The gale continued and at times the fire seemed to advance directly against the wind, due to the rough topography which created vicious currents.

Clayton's men were thought to have sought safety on Trail Ridge high above us through an area burned over the previous night at a point no visible from our position on the ridge.

Assistant Supervisor Krueger came up Trail Ridge about 6:00 p.m. and proceeded on to contact Clayton on his sector to plan a new attack on the fire as it was evident that some line had been lost. I dropped on down the ridge to the pump operating on the lower end of the line. A message shortly came to me from Dr. R. R. Davis, of the Wapiti CCG Camp, telling of his finding one man badly burned who had drifted down off the fire, reporting that the whole crew had been trapped. This was the first news we had that men had been burned, some perhaps fatally.

First aid equipment was set up by Dr. Davis near Blackwater Creek. More medical help and additional facilities were sent for at once. Rescue crews were organized immediately to search for those burned and needing help.

The fire was again attacked early the following morning by approximately 154 men, with 112 engaged in searching the burned area for the injured.

Both day and night shifts were on line construction until the fire was corralled. Additional Forest Officers arrived from the Regional Office and the Black Hills and Harney Forests. Men had also been drawn from Worland and Basin CCG Camps, which made a total of between 515 and 520 men engaged in some phase of suppressing the fire. By noon Tuesday, August 24, the fire was successfully controlled, having burned over approximately 1700 acres.

The normal reaction to this catastrophe among the camp was that of over-cautiousness on the line the following days. The slightest crowning inside the line caused some to abandon their post for open country. This was done in genuine seriousness and fear of being trapped once the fire got into tree tops.

On Sunday morning after the "blow up" several crucial spot fires were gaining headway rapidly. Hesitancy in hitting these hot spots became almost critical until the men were persuaded to go in and get them.

The memory of this tragedy will be uppermost in many minds when a fire crowns out, regardless of the circumstances. The successful handling of any fire still requires quick action by those on line construction. Intelligent differentiation between line abandonment and a hot fire is still essential. Therein lies the danger. We are very apt to be over-cautious for a time and by being over-cautious may let the immediate urge to leave the line outweigh our better judgment.

The tragedy has left us all with its gruesome claim of lives and injured. The fact still remains that fires must be fought and must be handled, as outlined in the Forester's fire policy which calls for "fast, energetic and thorough suppression of all fires in all locations"

-CHARLES E. FIFIELD - SHOOSHONE.

THE BLACKWATER FIRE CAMP

There were two camps on this fire which are known as the lower and upper fire camps. The lower fire camp was at the end of the road, and the upper camp was about two miles farther up the creek and nearer the original fire line.

The first meal for the fire fighters, which consisted of lunches, was made at the Wapiti CCC Camp and sent to the lower camp and distributed to the various crews from there; either sent to the men already on the line or given to them as they left for the fire.

The lower camp was the first one set up. Supplies, cooking utensils, stoves and grates were secured at the Wapiti CCC Camp and the first meal was served at 2:30 Saturday morning, which was breakfast for the Yellowstone Park men from NP-3. After eating, the men were given a lunch to carry and immediately left for the fire line. They brought food for 50 men for three days with them.

As soon as the Park boys were on their way camp was cleaned up and another meal started, as the Deaver boys were expected for breakfast at about 7:00 a.m.

The pack train then came back from the fire line from packing pumps, gasoline and lunches. The horses were allowed to rest till about 6:00 a.m. when they were used to pack food and equipment to the upper camp.

The Deaver (RS-7) and Tensleep (F-35W) boys arrived at the lower fire camp 11:00 a.m. Saturday and were fed and given lunches. The upper fire camp was established by this time and these men passed through that camp with Rangers Clayton and Post about 12:00 noon. Every one of them were in good spirits and many joking remarks were passed back and forth as the men filed through the upper camp.

Additional pack horses had arrived and by 1:00 p.m. Saturday supplies and equipment were rapidly pouring into the upper camp.

The boys from the Wapiti CCC Camp started coming in from the fire line for the first time about 1:00 p.m. These men were given dinner and a bed, they hunted shady places and most of them were asleep in a few minutes.

Gasoline, oil and extra lunches were sent to the fire line during Saturday afternoon from the upper camp. The lower camp at this time was used principally as a packing station.

Supper was served to the men in the upper fire camp about 6:00 p.m. The men had just started to eat when the message from Dr. Davis was

received stating that some men had been trapped. Rescue crews were started out immediately with blankets, nails and other material to make stretchers. The National Park Service portable radio was gotten into action and a call made through Yellowstone National Park Headquarters at Mammoth for doctors and ambulances, this brought immediate action, several local doctors came to the upper fire camp, ambulances came to the lower fire camp and stretchers were sent on to the upper camp.

The upper fire camp fed men all night Saturday, rescue parties came in at all hours of the night. 150 men arrived during the night and early morning; these men were all fed and made ready to go as they were called. Supplies and beds were sent to the first aid station for the injured.

At daylight Sunday morning 112 fresh men were sent to the fire line, and dispatched as searching crews and to bring in the casualties. Others were dispatched to help the injured in from the first aid station. Some were carried down on stretchers and those with lesser injuries walked down, with frequent rests.

The fire had shifted till the lower fire camp was the most accessible for the main body of the crew. Pack horses were loaded and started packing equipment back to the lower camp Sunday. The upper camp was left to care for 50 men. All men on the line either took lunches or had lunches sent to them so the evening meal was the first one at the lower camp. Equipment for a small camp was packed out from the lower fire camp to a small camp on the Elk Fork side of the fire Sunday afternoon.

The crews were very tired Sunday night, those in from the line and those on the searching parties. Every one was fed and given a bed.

Monday morning the men were called at 3:00 a.m., breakfasted, given a lunch and carefully checked out, then sent to the line shortly after daylight. During the day the lower camp, which was to be the main camp from then on, was arranged, an area was laid off for each of the various camps, here the men's beds and their equipment was segregated and placed. Each of the various camps then had their men altogether, when they were in the main camp and were easily found.

Tuesday morning the men were again gotten out at 3:00 a.m., fed, given a lunch and sent to the line in better time than the previous mornings. Camp was well organized and in shape, all men had been checked and were accounted for. Sufficient pack horses were available, at various times extra saddle horses had to be secured for forest officers. The main work in camp now, was keeping supplies on hand, tools gathered up, the kitchen clean and the other camps supplied.

Wednesday morning the men were allowed to sleep an hour later. Crews were cut down this day, three camps, Thermopolis, Basin and part of Worland released. Their crews were each checked out separately. Wednesday night the Yellowstone Park crew was released as soon as they came in from the line.

Thursday morning the last of the Worland camp and the company from Deaver were released, leaving only the Wapiti camp on the fire and some local civilians.

Water was packed to the fire line for back pack pumps to be used on mop up work.

The Wapiti CCC Camp was not released till Saturday night. They did mop up and patrol work Friday and Saturday, with the aid of water that was packed to them on horses.

Sunday morning small camps were established on the fire line for local civilian employees to use, while doing patrol and mop up work. There were three of these camps, two men each and one of five men,

Packers were kept busy until Tuesday night, August 31, packing in supplies, tools and equipment. Everything was cleaned up by that time, except the small camps that were on the fire line.

So ends another battle with the greatest enemy of the forest, whether large or small, man caused or other cause, they all spell destruction.

-MORRIS B. SIMPERS
Project Superintendent, Wapiti Camp, F-24W.

THE TENSLEEP CCC (F-35W) CAMP ON THE BLACKWATER FIRE,

Two 25-men crews under Foreman Tyrrell and Foreman Saban left their camp at Tensleep Meadows on the Bighorn Forest during the early hours of August 21st. They travelled by truck approximately 165 miles, and reached the supply camp on Blackwater at 11:30 a.m. The army had set up a camp here and the Tensleep men were fed in a very few minutes, outfitted with tools, lunches, etc., and started to hike to the fire line.

We walked to the burn on Blackwater Creek and met Supervisor Sieker who gave us directions for getting into the basin to the east. This part of the fire had burned during the night before, and line construction was not complete. Another hike up a steep ridge for about a mile past a Park Service crew and ten men from the B.P.R. crew, and we were on the job.

Foreman Tyrrell was at the head of the line, and Foreman Saban was to bring up the rear to see that the party was kept together. Ranger Clayton arrived just as we left the creek. He was to go with us. Everyone was in good spirits, the day clear and quiet, the fire barely smoking--it appeared to be an easy task to get a line through the basin to timber line before sun down. All the boys were "rarin' to go" and threw themselves into the job with a determination to "grab it" and boil the job down to line patrol.

Small crews under leaders attacked the line; scouting for open spots and natural line. Crews fell to work connecting up these points; Tyrrell was marking out sections and Clayton had not yet caught up with us. Good! We still had more men coming, the timber line was in sight. It was even easier than we had thought.

Suddenly a roar to the northwest, sounds like a fire below us. "Heads up, everyone, we'll have to find out what's up." A short, fast run to the top of a small ridge showed a spot fire about a quarter of a mile away, which had not shown before, burning briskly. Tops of the trees swung in the strong wind which was coming up through the basin, spot fires developed between the large spot fire and the main fire, and the wind had reached our line almost at once, and the large fire was a furnace immediately. "Everyone out--double time--this way!"

It was thought that we might skirt the edge of the spot fire and reach safety by going down hill; the men were coming out in good order from up and down the line, gathering on the ridge. Tyrrell was down along the line checking to see that all were getting out--no sign of Saban at the end of the line. Perhaps he had seen the danger and gone back.

The wind changed down the canyon, scooping up coals and burning branches from the main fire, building a raging furnace below our line.

Now the B.P.R. men are coming out on the run; our bunch is growing in number each second. There is still a way open down the ridge, but more men are coming out of the canyon. We must wait for those behind--all together, or none at all. Tyrrell is bringing up the rear, and reports all are out. We are ready to make a dash down the ridge. The wind changed again to the northeast, fire is coming up from below and we see the spot fire, now a large mass, go over the ridge below us into a deep canyon. Our only escape now is toward timber line--up hill, and steep at that.

Bert Sullivan, B.P.R. Foreman, takes the lead. Some of us wait for Tyrrell and the last ones out. The smoke is thick, the air is hot; we hurry up the ridge. Heavy tools are left behind. We take lady shovels, Pulaskies and canteens--we may need them for our own protection. We are about out of breath from the up-hill run, and it is doubtful if we can go on. Through the smoke we see a group of our men in a small park. It is Sullivan and the head of the line. He reports a short strip of timber between us and timber line, but the fire has reached it and is going around us. It is also coming up the edge of the park from the south. We take refuge on the north side of the ridge, and beat out sparks on each others clothing, while the timber to the south of us "crowns out."

No casualties so far, all in good order, and we are all agreed that as soon as the fire on the south cools down, we will be safe in the burn there while the timber to the north burns out. We crawl out on top with this in mind and get as near as heat and smoke will permit.

Without warning the wind again changes, and a cyclone sweeps up the ridge from the northwest. Unburned timber lower down the ridge "crowns out" and the park is swept by heat and flame. We run to the edge of the fire, but it is too hot to endure.

"All down on the ground!" But some do not have time to respond. Red spots appear on faces, and skin is stripped from all exposed surfaces. The heat is terrific, and it seems unbearable, but we have no safer place.

If this is the end, we must take it here.

It is all over in a few seconds, and then we must endure heavy smoke for, it seems hours. However, the rapid change in direction of the wind brought us fresh air at times, which probably saved many of us. The fury is past, smoke thinning down and we take stock of our company. Red spots, blisters, hurts of all descriptions, and groans, but no complaints.

The wind died with the sun down, and we make a dash for help through the now quiet burn. What a great relief to find Krueger and Sieker coming through the smoking burn to learn if any help is needed. They have had no way of knowing how we fared during the run, but had made every preparation for the emergencies. Food, water, men stretchers, a first aid station at the edge of the fire, doctors and medical supplies meet us at every turn along the trail out.

CCC boys at the fly camp on Blackwater receiving the news that night were of one mind. They replied to the camp commander that "If some of the boys have been burned, and are in trouble, we are going to get them out."

In spite of the disaster, men came forward, went into the fire, and put it out, taking the same chances that we did. Men have paid the supreme price, but the work is carried on.

-U. J. POST, BIGHORN -

C.C.C. DETERMINATION

One bright memory in the midst of all the tragedy surrounding the Blackwater Fire was the response of the CCC crews the morning following the blow up.

Naturally, all fire suppression work had ceased during that night. Every available foreman and man was on searching parties looking for injured men. At daylight a hundred and fifty man crew was again out searching for any that might have been missed during the night, and arranging for removal of the dead. But tragedy or not, there was still 1200 acres of fire running around loose and the humidity was below 10. Scouting and line construction had to be done and there were only tired, depressed men left to do it.

The CCC men arose to the occasion like veterans and at daylight three crews were on the fire line carrying on - determined to whip the fire that had beaten them so terribly the afternoon before. These boys put through difficult line that day and held it through a very critical afternoon. Most of them had seen horrible burns the night before and many saw corpses packed out during the day, but they did not let that deter them in their attack on a stubborn fire.

The CCC responded to an emergency in a very noble and courageous manner, and the Shoshone and the entire Forest Service appreciates it.

-JOHN SIEKER - SHOSHONE -

Urban J. Post
*Senior Forest Ranger
Bighorn National Forest*



THE FOREST FIRE FIGHTERS

The wind sweeps off the spire-like peak,
And is whirling the cinders high:
While down in the stifling, deadly reek,
We struggle, and all but die.

We have felled the trees in the fire's path,
Till our hands are bleeding and sore;
But always it speeds, with a hiss of wrath,
And leaps the barrier o'er.

We have fought it back, with blaze 'gainst blaze,
And yet has the foe slipped past;
But slowly we yield, in the choking haze,
Till the victory's won at last.

Small pay do we get, and thanks are gruff,
When we've fought the foe to his knees;
But, after all, the reward's enough,
When we hear the wind in the trees.

- ARTHUR CHAPMAN

STRETCHER BEARERS

The first definite knowledge that anyone on the Blackwater fire had that a crew had been trapped and men injured was when Billy Lea, of the B.P.R. and Post's crew, arrived on the trail above the upper fire camp and virtually fell into Dr. Davis' arms. Word was sent to the camp by Dr. Davis and Supt. Simperts, foremen Sullivan and Meglemre, and a group of enrollees from the Wapiti Camp started up to search for men. This was about 6:00 or 6:15 p.m. At 6:30 p.m. Supervisor Sieker radioed to the Park for doctors, nurses, medicine, etc., and then left for the fire with Foreman Hill and about 30 enrollees, as an additional searching and first aid party.

At about 7:00 p.m. a civilian fire fighter informed me that it had been reported below that some men had been trapped and injured, but the description of the location was so vague that there was little to go on. A short time before this, shouts had been heard from the lower end of the burn, and I had sent Pierce, another B.P.R. man, around below the fire to determine what the yelling was about. The lower end of the fire was then some distance below the point at which the line had originally been constructed. Very shortly after word was received about the disaster, distinct cries for help could be heard from the burned area near the old fire line. We went into the burn, which was still quite hot at this point, and about a quarter of a mile in, found an enrollee, Bevans, who had been calling for help. He was terribly burned, had no clothes left but his shoes. He pointed to a rock gulch a short distance away and said there were seven dead men there. I went to the gulch and found the seven dead, huddled together in a small group. It was very smoky in the gulch and quite dark. Having no light, I was unable to identify any of the men. Bevans was helped out of the burn by some of the searching party who had arrived by this time. Ranger Post came down from above at this time and reported that two of his men would have to be carried out, and his crew were unable to carry them. Some men were secured from one of the crews and taken in to their assistance. This group of about 40 men reached the first aid station, which had been set up at the lower end of the fire, at about 10:00 p.m. As soon as their burns were dressed, they were put to bed.

During all this time, and up to about 3:00 a.m., the entire area where this occurred was being combed by a crew of about 60 men. No additional injured men were located. As there was no way of making a check at this time as to just how many might still be alive in the burned area, the efforts of all men were concentrated on attempting to locate any additional injured men rather than to bring out the men known to be dead.

At daybreak a crew of about 115 men started out and gridironed the entire area until it was certain that no other injured or dead were there. Two additional dead men were found. There were two of the five that had broken away from Post's crew. Of the five, only one is still alive. He is the one Pierce found at the lower end of the burn, and took out to safety.

The dead men were taken out on pack horses or on stretchers early Sunday. All were taken to the Wapiti CCC Camp and then to Cody, where

final identification was made. Because of the ruggedness of the country, it was necessary to take the bodies out the only trail, which was through both fire camps. This was very hard on the morale of the CCC boys in the camps at the time. However, the boys carried on splendidly, both on the fire line and in the searching parties.

-CARL G. KRUEGER - SHOSHONE -

COMPENSATION CLAIMS

After thirty days of working with the endless maze of forms and supplemental reports on the casualties from the Blackwater fire - there seems to be a rift in the clouds with some hopes of seeing daylight. It is hoped that further experience in handling compensation claims will not come at so great a sacrifice of life nor so much sorrow to the bereaved.

When the enormosity of the task that faced us on Monday morning, August 23, was realized, conscience unkindly reminded us that we had been remiss in a careful study of the regulations which must now be applied. There was time for only a cursory review of the regulations. The one most essential need was ACTION.

Deaths were first reported to the Commission at Washington without the information as to burial wishes to the relatives. As soon as their desires were known, authority was requested from the Commission for issuance of Transportation requests to cover transportation of those remains which were to go by common carrier.

Identification at the morgue was a trying experience. Each body was fully identified and personal belongings found were properly marked and delivered to the relatives. Three undertakers worked long hours to prepare the bodies for transportation and burial.

As the relatives came to claim the remains of their loved ones, many details were arranged for them. Several who lived in the State made arrangements to have the bodies conveyed home by ambulances. One fine old gentleman came from Oregon. The citizens of the community did everything possible to make his sad mission to Cody as comfortable as possible. The Commission furnished this grief stricken father return transportation to Oregon as escort of the remains of his hero.

Another father came from California in company with the fiancee of a deceased fire fighter. It was a privilege to offer return transportation to the heartbroken girl as escort to the remains of the one she had loved. All such arrangements were made through the Forest Office. It was the one remaining service that could be rendered for the grief stricken relatives.

Then there were the hospitalized who could not be neglected. Doctors and nurses worked feverishly long hours. Special nurses were

assigned to critical cases and no effort was spared to halt the death toll.

Each foldered case before us presents an individual problem of securing supplemental data, such as certificates of birth and marriage, certificates of dependents and endless bills. An ordinary compensation case now seems comparatively simple.

To assist the community in properly submitting their accounts to the Commission, the Forest Office was contacted and assembled all bills for services. When Mr. Keegan, a member of the Commission staff, was in this city, he designated a certain physician to check all bills for approval. A fine piece of work was done expeditiously, and practically all bills have been submitted. To give some idea of the volume of bills, the drug bills approximated one thousand dollars, hospital bills two thousand dollars, nurses one thousand dollars and doctors about eighteen hundred dollars, which does not include some special expenditures paid from local relief funds.

One of the outstanding experiences through those trying days was the timely visit to the community of Mr. John J. Keegan, one of the three commissioners of the United States Employees Compensation Commission. His statement that he had not come to 'police' our actions, but to back us up, was indicative of the spirit which we have learned to expect from the Commission.

-NIELS C. ANDERSEN - SHOSHONE

B. P. R. COOPERATION

The Bureau of Public Roads construction crew working under the leadership of Baird French, Resident Engineer, responded to the Forest Service call for assistance in this fire in a most laudable and prompt manner.

Due to the presence of Regional Inspectors, Engineer French was unable to accompany the crew, but he sent his entire crew under Foreman Davis.

For purpose of fire suppression work, Mr. Davis willingly released control of the crew to Bert Sullivan, one of his men who was a listed fire cooperator on the Wapiti District. Working in close harmony, this crew composed of Bert Sullivan, Earl Davis, Sam Van Arsdall, Garland Bowman, Alfred Hoiland and Billy Lea, attacked the fire on its lower side and built a fine fire line at great speed. This crew was later joined by Ranger Post's crew and continued their good work until the blow up occurred.

Billy Lea endeavored to run through the fire with four enrollees. All lost their lives except enrollee Patzke. Lea was a native of Oregon where his body was sent for burial. Sullivan, Davis, Hoiland, Van Arsdall and Bowman were injured in the fire and were hospitalized for varying periods.

The spirit of cooperation in which Mr. French and his crew responded to our call is typical of all our relationships with the Bureau of Public Roads.

-JOHN SIEKER- SHOSHONE

SHOSHONE FIRE HISTORY.

From a compilation made by Fire Control Specialist A. A. Brown, the following interesting facts and figures have been obtained.

The average number of fires that have occurred on the Shoshone National Forest from 1909, when fire records were first started, thru 1936, was 6.8 annually. The average number during the period 1931-1936 inclusive, which are in what is known as the drouth years, was 11.5 fires annually. During these six years there were 69 fires, of which 47% were man-caused and 53% lightning-caused.

The total area burned on the Shoshone National Forest during the period 1909-1936, inclusive was 24,043 acres, of which 61% or 14,755 acres was burned in the Grandall Creek Fire of 1935. The average area burned annually during the last six years was 30,078 acres. The worst fire years were 1910, 1911, 1919, 1935 and 1937. The Blackwater fire of 1937 burned over approximately 1700 acres.

LOCAL COOPERATION

As soon as the news was broadcast that men on the Blackwater fire had been killed and injured, the town of Cody and the surrounding community gave us their unstinted assistance. The Doctors and nurses of Cody came to the fire line in order to aid in giving first aid treatment and additional nurses were requisitioned from surrounding towns to take care of the men as they were brought to town.

The civic organizations, such as the Cody Club and the American Legion, and all of the churches, organized committees to see that all necessary first aid materials were gathered together and made available for the over-crowded hospitals.

A relief fund was started to purchase necessities and other things to make the convalescence of the injured men more pleasant. The relief fund also furnished flowers and wreaths for all of the deceased. A memorial service was held on August 23 in the Methodist Church of Cody.

Too much commendation cannot be given to the various organizations in Cody and the surrounding community who gave such prompt and efficient service to meet this emergency.

- JOHN SIEKER-

MEMORIAL FOR SABAN AND TYRRELL

Regional Forester Allen S. Peck has announced that the winter quarters of the Tensleep Ranger District of the Bighorn National Basin, will be named Saban Ranger Station in honor of former Ranger James T. Saban, who lost his life in the Blackwater fire. The summer station of this Ranger District, which is located near Tensleep Lake, a beautiful body of water containing approximately 267 acres, which was created by the building of the Tensleep Dam, will be named Tyrrell Ranger station in honor of Junior Forester Paul Tyrrell, who also lost his life in this fire. These stations will be suitably marked and information concerning the records of Messrs. Saban and Tyrrell will be



A TRAPPER'S CABIN
One of Clayton's Sketches

filed in the Forest History and also the station record. These should stand for many years as a memorial to the bravery of these men.

CLAYTON MEMORIAL TRAIL.

The Clayton Memorial Trail has been designated to commemorate the memory of Ranger Alfred G. Clayton and his comrades who lost their lives in the Blackwater fire. It will follow the main Blackwater Creek to its junction with the East Fork, thence up the East Fork into the Basin and up Trail Ridge, where it will contour around through a blackened forest across Clayton Gulch and will end at Post Point.

Markers, monuments and plaques will tell the traveler about these points which are so vividly engraved upon the memory of fire fighters and forest officers. Here, on August 21, grim tragedy heaped its almost insufferable weight onto the shoulders of tired fire fighters.

On August 21, a sixty-man CCC crew under the leadership of Rangers Alfred Clayton and Urban J. Post arrived at the fire line and were fed at the first camp, Camp No.1. After this the men traveled up Blackwater Creek through Camp No.2 and past the First Aid Station. From there, the crew went up Trail Ridge along constructed fire line and joined the eight-man B.P.R. crew which was constructing fire line across Clayton Gulch. Ranger Clayton was in charge of the entire sector and Ranger Post was in charge of the construction crew.

Fire line construction was started by Post immediately and apparently Ranger Clayton and Foreman Saban were behind the main bunch lining up the mop up work and protecting the constructed line.

At about 3:30 P. M. a sudden wind of gale velocity sprang up and whipped the fire into the crowns. This wind swirled around in the rough canyons and threw the fire above and below constructed line.

All of this happened so suddenly that men with as wide experience in fire fighting as Clayton and Post were not able to anticipate the danger until it was upon them. Before this time the fire had been relatively quiet and had been burning down hill on the ground. When the blow up occurred, Ranger Clayton, Foreman Saban, and Junior Technician Hale and six enrollees were in what is now known as Clayton Gulch and apparently things happened so rapidly that these men did not even have time to scatter since they were found within thirty feet of each other.

Ranger Post was in a little more open country and had time to get his men together and get all of them to a high rocky knoll, which is now known as Post Point, where Post, Foreman Tyrrell, Fire Cooperator Bert Sullivan, and B.P.R. foreman Davis managed to hold all of the men except two, who broke away from the bunch. The point selected by Post and Sullivan was the best available place to weather the storm, and would undoubtedly have been a successful point had the fire not crowned on both sides of the rocky point at practically the same time. Several hours after, when the fire had cooled down sufficiently so that men could travel safely through it, Post, Tyrrell, Sullivan, and Davis with the entire crew made their way through the fire to the first aid station where Dr. Davis, CCC Surgeon, gave first aid treatment to all of them.

If all of the men had followed exactly the instructions given them by Post, and the other foremen, there would have been much less injury, but when the heat became almost unbearable, many of the men got up and started running around which naturally exposed more of them to the heat than if they had been lying down close to the ground.

In order to commemorate the value and sacrifice of these men, the Shoshone will build and monument the Clayton Memorial Trail.

Starting at U.S. Highway #20, the Cody-Yellowstone Highway, there will be a bronze plaque in a stone monument on which will be engraved the names of those who paid with their lives so that our forests may be green. Along side will be a large rustic sign telling briefly of the incident and outlining the historic points along the trail.

The trail will be marked by distinctive trail markers at appropriate intervals, bearing the name of the trail.

A tentative wording of the signs along the trail will be as follows:

At Camp No.1.

"This camp was established during the night of August 20, 1937. It was the base camp and was organized to feed and equip 500 men."

At Camp No.2.

"This camp was established by noon, August 21, 1937. It was organized to feed and equip 250 men. From here the call for doctors, nurses, and medical supplies was sent by radio at 6:00 P.M. August 21."

At the First Aid Station:

"At this Station, Dr. Robert R. Davis, CCC surgeon, gave first aid treatment to over 30 men during the night of August 21-22, 1937. This prompt first aid treatment unquestionably saved many lives,"

At Clayton Gulch:

"Ranger Clayton, Foreman Saban, Junior Technician-Hale, and CCC enrollees Rogers, Griffith, Gerdes, and Mayabb were trapped here by the on-rushing flames. The back pack pumps which are a part of this pedestal were being used by the men in mopping up the fire line."

And at Post Point:

"On this rocky knoll, Ranger Post and Foreman Tyrrell attempted to evade the fire. Post and Tyrrell gathered their somewhat panicky crew and held them together at great personal sacrifice. Tyrrell died of his burns and Post spent a month in the hospital. If the flames had not reached up on both sides of this point at once, these men would have been relatively safe."

"From this point a good general view of the terrible damage done by fire can be seen."

It is also planned to plant a group of four or five foot Douglas fir trees around Clayton Gulch and Post Point. Lodgepole will undoubtedly come in on the burn in a solid stand and the fir will stand out distinctively for years to come.

- JOHN SIEKER - SHOSHONE-

MEMORIAL ADDRESS.

The community of Cody held a memorial service at the Cody Methodist church Monday afternoon, August 23, which service was broadcast from the church. Excerpts from the memorial address by Milward J. Simpson follow:

" --- We in Cody little appreciated, when we first learned that a fire had broken out on Blackwater Creek in the Shoshone National Forest, that it might result disastrously. We even observed the mobilization of the large groups of CCC boys without thought of fear. We saw these young men as they went through the town of Cody on Saturday, cheerful, care-free and eager to match their efforts with this demon of fire. We appreciated the fact that they were under able leadership and that they would be given proper care and direction in their efforts to subdue what most of us felt was-- just another forest fire.

These young men set about the task willingly--gladly, I may say; each went to work at his allotted duty; and everything was going well. It seemed that the fire was under control. But something happened. A breeze that had been blowing steadily from a single direction changed into a wind of almost hurricane proportions--changing first from one direction to another. The fire, which had seemed so nearly quenched, went entirely out of control. The men who, a few short minutes before, had not even sensed danger, were placed in peril. Flames were fanned into raging torrents of fire, and hot flashes of heat were projected here and there throughout the area, depending only upon the direction of the air currents.

Men, experienced in the fighting of forest fires, ordered, and endeavored to lead, a retreat to places of safety. Each man, who a short while before, had striven to stop the fire, turned his efforts entirely to saving the lives of his fellowmen and of himself.

As wave after wave of heat rolled about these men, and as flames of fire and hot embers were blown about them, they used every means to protect one another and to get each other to safety. Some of them, overcome, were helped to their feet by their fellows. They used every means known to experienced fire fighters to avoid death which was everywhere about them.

--Act after act of heroism might be recounted, but in spite of it all, fifteen of these brave fire fighters have given their lives in this effort to subdue a forest fire, and approximately forty more are suffering the pains of burns and will ever bear the marks of this battle against fire,

We owe these young men who have given their all, and these others who will bear the scars of this conflict through life, the duty that we shall endeavor to prevent future forest fires; and we shall dedicate our efforts to the end that the risks of fire-fighting be lessened. We, who have examined into this matter, place no blame upon the officers who were conducting this battle against fire. The unusual change in the wind, both as to direction and velocity, was the cause. It must go down as an inevitable and unavoidable catastrophe. We are appalled by its greatness.

-- Let it be said of those who are gone: "Greater love hath no man than this, that he gave his life for his friend." Truly, each of these men died for us - trying to save our beautiful Shoshone National Forest. Had we known the peril, we would have surely said, "Let it burn." But now that it has happened, let me say for Cody and community that, though we solemnly regret that these lives have been given, we do appreciate more than words can tell the fact that these men are heroes of that war which must continue to be fought against the destruction of our forests by fire. These men died in the service of their country, in the service of their fellowmen. May each of us think with them, in closing, as is so well stated by Edgar A. Guest, in his poem on "Compensation":

'I'd like to think when life is done,
That I had filled a needed post,
That here and there I'd paid my fare
With more than idle talk and boast;
That I had taken gifts divine,
The breath of life, and manhood fine,
And tried to use them now and then
In service for my fellowmen."

-o-o-o-o-o-o-o-o-o-o-o-

SCROLL PRESENTED TO TENSLEEP CAMP.

On September 20 a scroll expressing the appreciation of the Forest Service to Company 1811 of the Civilian Conservation Corps, otherwise known as Tensleep Camp F-35-W, was presented to the Company by Regional Forester Allen S. Peck. Copies of this scroll, which is reproduced in this number of the Bulletin, were presented to all of the members of the Company. Copies had previously been presented to the enrollees who were at that time confined in the army hospital at Fort Francis E. Warren. Copies were also mailed to the families of the men who lost their lives in the fire.

Supervisors Sieker and Conner also attended the presentation. It was announced that although the Tensleep Camp was to be permanently disbanded on October 1, the Company number will be retained by transferring it to another camp.

ALFRED G. CLAYTON

Alfred G. Clayton was born in Brooklyn, New York, on November 11, 1892, the son of an accountant, the family of which had resided for many years in the heart of New York City. At the age of sixteen, after graduating from high school, he felt the call of the west and a desire to break away from the roar and grind of the city.

He arrived at Spearfish, South Dakota, in the winter of 1908, where he worked on a ranch. From there, he drifted from ranch to ranch through western South Dakota and northern Wyoming, punching cattle, herding sheep, and trying his hand at almost everything until he at last landed in the Forest Service as a Forest Guard on the Washakie National Forest in 1914.

In 1915 he was appointed assistant Forest ranger on the Bighorn National Forest and was stationed at Hyattville, where on September 22, 1915, he married Mattie Lee Barnett. He remained on the Bighorn until 1919, when he resigned to try his hand at stock raising.

Returning to the Service in 1924 as Assistant Ranger on the Washakie, he was stationed at the South Pass Ranger Station until 1925, when he was transferred to the Sheridan District where he remained until his transfer to the South Fork district on the Shoshone Forest in April, 1937.

Clayton was a ranger of the "old School". He loved the out-of-doors and disliked the office. He was an artist and writer of ability, and his sketches were used frequently in "American Forests". He contributed a series of sketches for "Sapling Sam's Scrapbook", a humorous feature of American Forests, also illustrations for the "Death Defying Moments" stories published in the same magazine. During his spare moments prior to his death, he was working on a series of sketches entitled "Phil, the Forest Ranger", which he had in mind introducing into the R-2 Bulletin to replace the page of sketches "Take It or Leave It, by Ranger Zilch", which ended with the death of its creator John C. Leadbeater of the Pike on February 15, 1937. Clayton as guest artist prepared the Zilch page for the February issue of the Bulletin, also the cover for that issue which was an excellent ink sketch of "Chief Washakie of the Shoshones."

He enjoyed writing and was a frequent contributor to the Rocky Mountain Region Bulletin. "The Chines of Lost Valley" appeared in the January, 1935 issue of American Forests.

He left a host of friends in the Dubois country and in Lander, where Mrs. Clayton resides with her son Jimmy, age fourteen, - the daughter Jeanette, attending the University of Nebraska.

Ranger Clayton was buried in Lander, services were held at the Episcopal Church, with Masonic services at the grave. Representatives of the Washington, Regional and Supervisor's offices acted as honorary pallbearers.

Clayton had the ability to see beauty in everything, goodness in everyone; a man with a keen sense of humor, admired and respected by all who knew him; loyal to his friends, he had many; tolerant with his enemies, he had few.

ALFRED G. CLAYTON
(Requiescat in Pace)

We know you have heard the story,
Which was news a few weeks ago;
When fire in the State of Wyoming
Felled a ranger, with one fatal blow.
It was only news to the many
Who gave it but passing thought;
But to us who know fire-fighting
'Twas an act which God had wrought.

You know how the accident happened;
How he came to relieve the distressed;
Took charge of the job of suppression,
While the others sought food and rest.
With no intimation of danger
He began his attack on the fire,
And with not a thought that his forest
Would soon be his funeral pyre.

But fate and fiendish fire-forces
Joined hands to defeat the new foe;
And he and his youthful companions,
Were trapped - and their bodies laid low.
But their spirits soared on to glory,
To report to The Chief, up on High,
Who, we know, gives to all a welcome,
Who so gallantly, fearlessly die.

When a soldier goes forth to battle,
There are orders which he must obey;
But no high commands or bugle-call
Were urging him on that day.
He saw his duty and did it,
And paid the full price it demands;
But his name will live, as a symbol
Of duty that needs no commands.

To us he was truly heroic
For - "He died our forests to save";
And that epitaph, carved on a tombstone
Would appropriately mark his grave.
And whene'er we sit 'round our camp-fires,
We'll recall his unselfish deed;
And with sorrowful hearts remember
That he, at the last, proved our creed,

A hero? oh, no! just a ranger
Who answered unquestioned the call;
Whose motto - like ours - was service;
Who gave to "The Service" his all.
And a promise we give to his loved ones,
That as long as rangers shall ride -
The name of Alfred G. Clayton
Will still be remembered with pride.

-L.C.SHOEMAKER - ROOSEVELT -



CLAYTON

Somewhere where colors of the hills
Spoke to this forth-right hearty joyous man,
Unloosened elements of this green earth he loved
Suddenly in bursts of fury ran.

Somewhere where shadows, nests, and birds,
Made music and a dream-house of a Tree,
He gave his life for love of life as did
The ones who entered Heaven from Calvary.

Quiet will lie with flowers in the glades,
Softly on earth deep summer's peace will fall.
Where stronger than the mountain lives his love
Transcending life and hills terrestrial.

-By Frederick W. Arnold, Providence, Rhode Island.

"Dubois Frontier"

REX A. HALE

Rex A. Hale, was born May 3, 1916, at Afton, Wyoming, son of Mr. and Mrs. Louis Hale.

When he was eleven years old he met with a serious accident. While attending to his traps, a 410 shotgun, which he was using, discharged, striking him in the right knee, almost demolishing it. It was thought that his leg would have to be amputated, but an operation by a skilled physician proved to be successful. After wearing a cast for several months he was able to use it almost perfectly.

He entered the Star Valley High School in 1930. In spite of his physical handicap he proved to be a star athlete in his high school career.

He graduated in 1934 and then enrolled in the Civilian Conservation Corps, with the Company located at Jackson, Wyoming. He acted as Company clerk for about one year. He was then transferred to the Alpine camp, where he was forestry clerk.

In June 1936, he married Reberta E. Miller of Afton, Wyoming. They made their home at Afton, until his appointment in April 1937, (when only twenty years of age) as Junior Assistant to Technician, at the Wapiti Camp, F-24W located in the Siwashone National Forest. Thereupon Hale moved his family to Cody.

Besides his wife and infant daughter, he is survived by his parents, one sister and six brothers.

Hale was bright, had a pleasing personality and was well liked by his associates. The energy, enthusiasm, interest, leadership and ambition displayed by him during his period of service at the Wapiti Camp gave promise of a creditable career when his life was so ruthlessly cut off by the fire demon.

Editor's Note: Biography prepared from information furnished by Mrs. Hale and forest officers.

THE CLOCK OF LIFE

The clock of life is wound but once,
And no man has the power
To tell just when the hands will stop,
At late or early hour.
Now is the only time you own
Live, love, toil with a will;
Place no faith in to-morrow, for
The clock may then be still.

-Anonymous -

THE FIRE FIGHTERS.

Sullen, black and heavy rainclouds,
In a promise of their bounty,
Ringed the ridges round with lightning.
Flashing swords of frightful beauty
Played a thundering, rumbling marchtime.
Through the fury of their threatening
Showed the promise of the rain drops,
Thus giving hope to drouthy forests,
Of a hope almost despaired.

On a ridge, with stretching branches,
Reaching for the welcome moisture
Stood an old and thirsty fir tree,
For his folly and his braveness,
Paid the retribution
For the brave and pioneering.
All his upward reaching branches
Made a perfect shining target
For the war god of the summer.
Lightning licked with sharpened fury,
Tore the arms and split the heart wood,
Sent hot sparks deeply coursing
Down the trunk and to the ground duff.

Then the wind from out the storm-clouds
Whipped the tiny burning spot fire
To a raging hungry demon.
Red and yellow leaped the blazes,
Seared the beauty of the forest,
Laughed and roared its great displeasure
At man's futile, curbing measures.
Swift and sure the flaming torrent
Ripped the cover from the forest;
Stripped the leaves from pallid aspen,
Left them naked, gasping, dying;
Paused to sear each tiny seedling,
Children of the despoiled "Quakies";
Leaped to pine and spruce and fir tree;
Ran exultant through their cordons;
Swept scorching o'er their branches,
Burning, tearing at their anguish.
Lapped dry, cooling-saving stream beds,
Stripping naked all the bank sides;
Burned the panic stricken rabbits
Fleeing headlong through the grasses.
Caught the mule deer and the white tail,
Loping bear cubs, lumbering mothers,
Killing, maiming and destroying
All the wild things in its pathway.

Turned the peaceful scene to horror,
Left it smoking, dead and dying.
Then the murderous, flaming pageant,
Turning quickly on the air stream,
Caught a desperate band of fighters,
Fighting for their very lives' sake.
Choked them to complete submission,
Left their seared and black scarred bodies
Broken, smoking on a ridge top.
From the man-things turned its fury,
Burned a hillside and a valley,
Found itself confronted head-on
By an army of fire fighters.
Then it met an answering war cry
From a line of blazing fire wall,
Found a flanking fire line steadied
By fire tools, men and water.
Found the struggle too much for it,
Found itself now overpowered,
Desperately burned a moment brighter,
Died to smoking stumps and ashes.
Chuckled as it lay there fettered,
Counted acres burned and ravished,
Tallied lives and beauty taken,
Then the conquered fire submitted
To its tired and hard pressed victors;
Submitted, then quiescent
'Till another shaft of lightning,
Or a camper's careless camp fire,
Or a smoking cigarette stub,
Turns loose, the demon lurking
To wreck fresh vengeance on the helpless.

Editor's Note: The foregoing poem, written by a Junior Assistant Technician, in one of the Colorado Camps, who prefers to remain anonymous, is dedicated to Mr. Hale and his comrades.

PAUL E. TYRRELL.

Paul E. Tyrrell was born August 11, 1913, the son of Mr. & Mrs. George E. Tyrrell, of 2057- Harrington Avenue, Oakland, California. He graduated from Roosevelt High School, Oakland and thereupon entered the University of California majoring in forestry. He graduated in 1936 with the degree of Bachelor of Science in Forestry. Tyrrell was engaged in experimental work in the University of California forest during the summer of 1935. From June 1 to October 15, 1936 he was employed by the Bureau of Entomology and Plant Quarantine on blister rust control.

He was appointed Junior Forester, effective February 25, 1937, and was assigned to the Harney National Forest as Technical Foreman at Custer Camp F-12. On March 15 he was transferred to the Bighorn Forest

as foreman at Camp F-34. On May 16, Tyrrell brought a detachment of enrollees to Tensleep to prepare the camp for occupancy. Company 1811 moved in from Bastrop, Texas on May 25 and Tyrrell was assigned to this camp (F-35).

He came with enrollees of Company 1811 to fight the Blackwater fire and the happenings of that fateful day of August 21, 1937 are given in detail elsewhere in this Bulletin.

Tyrrell was severely burned with other members of his crew marooned on a rocky point. The long trip to the first aid station, thence down the trail to the road where an ambulance awaited for another trip of thirty miles to Cody resulted in so much exposure that double pneumonia set in. Paul was unable to rally from this and passed on at 1:00 p.m. August 26. His father and his fiance were at his bedside at his death.

Tyrrell's sense of responsibility for the men in his charge is shown in the signed statement of enrollee Alcario Serros as follows:

"Then we saw that we didn't have no chance to go back, so Ranger Post told Mr. Tyrrell to take care of us, and he took us up to the rim rock. The fire started from the east, and then south, and then the west. It was the west fire that burned us. As the fire came closer to us we layed down on the rock ridge. Mr. Tyrrell layed on top of me. When the fire burned Mr. Tyrrell he ran and I ran, too, about 10 feet."

As he was the same age as many of the enrollees in his care, it was necessary for him to have definite leadership qualities, and this was very evident in the fine spirit between Paul and his crew. He had a pleasing personality and took a keen interest in the sports in the camp and the camp life as a whole.

In a letter to Paul's father, Regional Forester Allen S. Peck said:

"We Forest Service men of the Rocky Mountain Region feel a very special sense of loss in the case of your son, because we felt confident that he faced a very promising future in the Forest Service. I personally had the pleasure of making his acquaintance rather intimately just a few weeks before his death, and had looked forward to having him with us as a member of our permanent force. He impressed me as being an unusually well educated and able young forester."

The picture of the Blackwater fire on the cover of the Bulletin was taken by A. L. Gibson of the Bureau of Entomology, who is stationed at the Wapiti CCC Camp.

The aerial picture was taken by Norman W. Schmid, aerial photographer.

THREE HEROES
OF THE BLACKWATER FIRE



Rex A. Hale
*Junior Assistant to Technician
Shoshone National Forest*



Paul E. Tyrrell
*Junior Forester
Bighorn National Forest*



James T. Saban
*CCC Foreman - Jenseep Camp-F-35
(Formerly Forest Ranger on Medicine Bow
and Chippewa National Forests.)*

JAMES T. SABAN.

James T. Saban was born April 22, 1901, at Hyattsville, Wyoming. He attended the Polytechnic Institute at Billings, Montana for three years and later took the 90-day short course in the School of Forestry, University of Montana.

Saban worked on trail construction on the Bighorn Forest in 1922 and later served as a foreman on this activity on the Chugach Forest in Alaska. Before passing the Forest Ranger's examination in October 1923, he also had some experience in fire suppression and insect control work on the Selway, Lolo, Flathead and Coeur d'Alene Forests in Region 1, and the Wyoming Forest in Region 4.

He was appointed as Assistant Forest Ranger May 1, 1924, and was in charge of the Keystone and Snake River districts, and also on timber sale supervision on the Medicine Bow Forest for approximately five years. He resigned on account of ill health, and on July 1, 1931, he was reinstated as Senior Forest Ranger on the Bena District, Chippewa National Forest, Minnesota. A strenuous fire season on the Chippewa in 1933 resulted in a nervous breakdown, and, at his request, Saban was relieved from the responsibilities of a district ranger and assigned to CCC work as a technical foreman.

Saban later resigned on account of his health and returned to Wyoming. During 1937 he was employed by the Taggart Construction Company and his health had improved to such an extent that he applied for reinstatement to a foremanship in the CCC. He was assigned to Tensleep Camp F-35 on August 2, and had been on duty only three weeks when he met his death with Clayton, Hale and enrollees Gerdes, Griffith, Mayabb and Rodgers in the inferno in Clayton Gulch.

Saban was a man of pleasing personality, a hard worker with lots of experience in practical forestry and fire fighting. He was aware of the constant danger in connection with forest fires and attacked them with bravery and judgment. It is the irony of fate that forest fires, which were, in part, responsible for Saban giving up a promising forestry career in Region 9, were responsible for his death near his old home in the Bighorn basin.

Saban is survived by his wife, Mrs. Ione Georgia Saban, who has returned to her former home in Ashland, Wisconsin, also by two children, Jack, 7 - and Louise, 5 - and his mother, Mrs. Bertha Saban of Hyattsville, Wyoming. He was buried at Hyattsville, near the mountains he loved so well.

A candle is not lighted for itself;
neither is a man. The light that
serves self only is no true light,
its one virtue is that it will soon
go out. Light unshared is darkness.

- George MacDonald -