

CCC LEGACY CHAPTER 123 NEWSLETTER

3412 Pleasant Run Road, Irving, Texas 75062

January 2014

Chartered: Nov. 1, 1985. **Past Presidents:** *Nelson Oats, *Harold Ballard, *W. O. Mullin, *Verle Oringderff, *Harold Trammell, *William Oakley, Frank Polenta, *S. L. Baker, *George Payne, *Harry Steinert, & *Al Clement. *deceased. **Current Officers:** President-Mike Pixler, phone contact: 817-929-1557, First Vice President-Jim Rau, phone contact: 817-367-3343, Second Vice president-Pat Mann, phone: [info later], Secretary/Treasurer- Steve Porter, phone contact: 817-244-6714, Sergeant at Arms-Troy Jones, Chaplain-Rev. James Pixler, Kitchen Committee, [Open], Historian-Ruby Pixler, Reporter at Large & Newsletter Editor-Bill Stallings, phone contact: 972-255-7237.

Monthly Meeting is held on the *second* Saturday of each month from 10:30 AM to 1PM at the North Side Multipurpose Center, 1801 Harrington [North], Fort Worth, TX 76106. Dues are \$10 a person annually and are effective from Oct. to Oct.

Directions: Interstate Hwy 30 runs east & west. It accesses the downtown Fort Worth area from the south. Exit north on Henderson St. After a couple of miles it crosses a fork of the Trinity River and becomes State Hwy 199 which goes to Lake Worth, and the Fort Worth Nature Center & Refuge. When you reach the traffic light at the intersection of 18th St. NW, turn right [east] and go up the hill four blocks to Homan St. Turn left [north], and go a block to the Y. Stay right and continue into the Center's rear parking lot. Our meeting room door with the CCC sign is to the right as you approach the building. Bring a friend & enjoy fun, fellowship & food. Sign the register for you may win the \$10 door prize.

WEDDING ANNIVERSARIES: No anniversaries in January.

HAPPY BIRTHDAY: Tony Rodriguez, Jan 1st; James Green and Ernest Hubbard, both Jan. 2nd; Newell Parsons, Jan. 5th; Edward Schuckert, Jan. 8th; Fay Clement, Jan. 9th; Robbie McKee Warren, Jan. 14th; Goldie Vaughn, Jan. 20th. G.M. [Boots] Brice, Jan. 30th.

MINUTES OF MEETING OF CCC LEGACY CHAPTER 123 ON SATURDAY, JANUARY 11, 2014; Weather: Clear and sunny, 55°, Attendance : 15

The meeting was called to order at 11:04 AM by President Pixler. The invocation was offered by Rev. James Pixler. Sgt.-at-Arms Troy Jones led the pledges to the U.S. and Texas flags.

President Pixler reminded the members of the purpose of the CCC Legacy.

All members present indicated they had received the minutes of the December 2013 meeting. A motion to accept the minutes as written was made by Jim Rau and 2nd by Pat Mann. Motion passed. Financial report was read by Steve Porter, Secretary/Treasurer. Motion to accept the financial report was made by Merle Timblin and 2nd by Troy Jones. Motion passed.

Happy Birthday was sung to members Tony Rodriguez, James Green, Ernest Hubbard, Newell Parsons, Fay Clement, and Robbie McKee Warren; all of whom were not present.

Old business was a reminder by President Pixler and 1st VP Jim Rau of the efforts to preserve the CCC built structures at Lake Worth.

In light of several anniversaries in March 2014, namely the 50th for the Fort Worth Nature Center & Refuge, 40th for Friends of the Nature Center, and CCC Day in Texas on March 29th; a discussion was held to form a committee to include the Chapter in these events. The possibility of purchasing towels similar to those distributed last year during the 80th anniversary of the CCC was made. A motion was made by Mike Pixler and 2nd by Jim Rau to have Larka Tetens chair the committee and members be Jim Rau, Pat Mann, and Mike Pixler. Motion passed.

One of our new members, Jack Vaughn, a CCC "Boy" and WW II veteran, spoke of his experiences in the CCC and also brought a book of memorabilia for the members to view.

The can was passed for donations. Troy Jones won the \$10 door prize and donated it to pay the current year chapter dues for new member Goldie Vaughn.

The blessing was offered by Rev. James Pixler. The Motion to adjourn was made by Merle Timblin, 2nd by Troy Jones. Motion passed and the meeting adjourned at 12:00 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Steve Porter, Secretary/Treasurer

The President's Corner,

The subject for this corner is: Kids, take care of your parents!

Happy New Year! We made it through the holidays for the most part without incident. Don't want any more of that ice for a day or two or never, though. Hope this finds you and yours in good health.

Why would anyone sit in a room alone, no TV, no radio, not reading, just doing nothing? That's okay, I couldn't come up with anything either. I'm not talking about for a few minutes. I'm talking about a few days. Wake up, cleanup, might do breakfast; might not. Might get dressed; might not. No, guess I'll just sit here in the dark and do nothing, for a little while, fine; for the day, not so much. Kids, check on your parents! I understand with the ice we had in December and not getting out in that. It doesn't hurt to call though. I watch television some, I guess we all do. I may not be watching, but it's on; got to have some noise going, not silence. That's just me. But if the seniors don't have the TV or radio on because they forgot how to turn it on, that's a problem. Kids, check on your parents! What about their meds? What about their appointments. How much effort does it take to at least make a phone call? Not much. Let's be sure as kids, we do the right thing. Remind them of the CCC Legacy meeting coming up. Take the time, let's say it takes four hours to go by, give them a ride to the meeting and back home once a month. Math's not my strong subject, if I had one, but, let's see: 4 hours a month, X 12 months; Wow! That's only 48 hour in a year's time you took your parents where they wanted to go. I wonder how many hours they took you as a child where you wanted to go; more than 48 without a doubt. Kids,

take care of your parents! Today's lifestyle for most of us is such that we just go-go, got to get this done. Do this, do that, and, and... If this sounds familiar, it's probably because I have written on the subject before. The difference being this time, I'm concerned about our parents and seniors. I still perhaps should take more time for myself. Time to relax and have a little "me" time. Guess not, too much to do. Anyway, back to the seniors; we go about our activities thinking of only "our" kids. That by itself is okay, that's what parents do. We take care of our kids. The point is, our parents and seniors took care of their kids, too. Hellooo, I know, I'm one of those kids. Oh, wait a minute, kids take care of your parents and seniors! You will not be able to, sooner than you think. Help us take care of our parents and seniors. With that, I hope to see you at our next CCC Legacy Chapter 123 meeting, February 8, 2014. There's plenty of time to plan and attend.

Yours in Service,

Mike Pixler, President
CCC Legacy Chapter 123

NEW MEMBERS JACK AND GOLDIE VAUGHN

We welcomed new members Jack and Goldie Vaughn to our January meeting! They are residents of Arlington, Texas, and Jack served in the CCCs in Arizona and is a veteran of the U.S. Marine Corps. He was in the South Pacific on the Island of American Samoa in World War II. Jack's CCC Company was sent to Southern Arizona and their principle job was building fences and roads across the rugged landscape there. In fact, member Merle Timblin served in that same general area doing similar work. Jack told us that this past summer he had his 90th birthday, and his family planned an evening at the Ball Park in Arlington to see the rangers play. When Jack and Goldie got there, Rowdy, the Ranger's Mascot, unexpectedly met them and escorted them out on the field. There they were asked to get into an open vehicle, and before they realized what was going on, they were driven completely around the park infield. The PA announcer told the crowd of Jack's 90th birthday and that he was a CCC and U.S. Marine Veteran of WW II. Thirty thousand fans gave him a standing ovation!

We Now Resume the Story of Edward Schuckert in His CCC Camp in California

Edward fought about 35 fires as a CCC boy, but on July 2, 1942, their CCC camp was shut down as the entire program came to an end due to the war. On his last day of his time in the CCC, the Forest Service supervisor came to Ed and asked if he would like to go to work for the Service full time, and if so, could he start the following Monday. His pay would go from \$30 per month to \$110. Ed accepted immediately and felt that he was going to be a rich man all of a sudden. He became a firefighter working out of the Newhall Ranger District.

Another opportunity for Ed soon came up. Due to the fear of Japanese attacks on California from the air, an Air Warning Service was hurriedly organized, and with the Forest Service Fire Warning towers being unused in the winter months and on high ground with excellent visibility, they were put to use using two-person teams. One of the towers in the Newhall District had a husband and wife team, and one of them had a medical condition requiring them to take a leave. Ed was asked if he would fill in. He wasn't sure, after all he was just age 17 and still without a driver's license, and would have to be driven to the tower. He accepted, was given a short 2 to 3 hours of instruction, and he and another young man became Air Warning Observers with 28 days on duty with 2 days off per month. Their location was a busy one due to heavy military air traffic plus two commercial air

routes crossing in the area; they reported hundreds of sightings and engine sounds each month. One incident Ed remembers was seeing a C-47 Transport towing a glider, and for some reason, the tail section of the C-47 separated and the plane crashed, but all on board parachuted to safety. The glider was able to make it to a landing area.

Ed and his partner had to make their food supply last for the month before they were re-supplied. He remembers once they ran short of meat, and secretly shot a deer out of season and hid it in the woods to keep from being found out.

At this point Ed switches gears and changes from his own story to that of a future friend and co-worker and more.

In the summer of 1943, while camping with her parents in Elizabeth Lake Canyon near Castaic, California, twenty year old, Zoe Willis asked a U.S. Forest Service Patrolman, Ralph Stevens, if he thought a woman could perform his duties since there was a shortage of able bodied men due to having been called into military service. He listened, then took her name, address and phone number, and told her he would forward the info through channels.

Three weeks later she got a phone call from a Mr. Mendenhall, Forest Supervisor for the Angeles National Forest, asking her to come to his office in downtown Los Angeles for an interview. Mr. Mendenhall and his assistant then offered her a challenge that if she could locate another woman that would be interested, they could become a woman firefighting crew. They would have to be physically fit and would comprise a two firefighter initial attack fire crew for the remainder of the 1943 fire season. Miss Willis was not expecting this as a job prospect at all, but it intrigued her, so she began the search for another woman about her age, physically fit, who displayed enthusiasm for the work.

It took a few weeks before Zoe found another girl who she believed could handle the job that had been proposed to them. Her name was Carol and she was nineteen. Zoe phoned Mr. Mendenhall that she had found a suitable girl who was willing and able, and that she felt could do the task. They could report for assignment in a day or so. The girls were told to report to the District Ranger, Ray McCormick, on the Newhall-Saugus Ranger District, near Newhall in Southern California. On August 1, 1943, the girls arrived at the ranger station via a Greyhound

Bus with baggage in hand. They were met by Fire Control Officer, Howard Evans, who promptly got them signed in on all the paper work and putting them on the payroll. After a quick orientation tour, the girls were taken to their new home at the Mint Canyon Forest Fire Station.

They received fire training for the next three weeks; basic fire control, fire equipment maintenance and operation, and station and campground care. They got live fire training while doing hazard reduction burning along railroad right of way in Soledad Canyon on Angeles National Forest. After three weeks of training, the girls were reasonably skilled enough, that they were permitted to make initial attacks on wildfires in their area.

The 1943 fire season closed on November 1 after a substantial rainfall. The Mint Canyon Station, along with all others, was ordered closed until the next fire season threat. Some personnel were laid off; others put on road and trail maintenance. The two girls were offered a winter assignment as Aircraft Warning Observers at the Warm Springs Lookout Station above Elizabeth Lake Canyon. Two hundred lookout stations between San Diego, Calif. and Vancouver, Washington, and for 100 miles inland, were activated as observation posts to monitor all flights of aircraft; the possibility of the Japanese attacking the West Coast was still feared. These

stations were manned 24 hours a day. All flights were reported to an Aircraft Filter Center where they were plotted on a huge map board.

The two girls lived in the lookout tower; cooked and slept alternately. A small enclosed room attached to a single car garage was used as sleeping quarters. It was 24 hours on duty for 28 days before having two days off. Zoe and Carol lived on the Warm Springs mountain top for five months. They experienced everything winter could throw at them; ice, snow, rain, blizzards, and winds up to 80 mph. Sometimes they were socked in for days by clouds, having to rely on their ability to hear aircraft engine sounds as planes passed by.

In early April of 1944 Zoe was informed that she would be in charge of a five girl fire crew assigned to Newhall Station, the busiest station in the district. In those days, forest fire stations had a paid cook due to the fire crew being confined to their station just as those on lookout towers. Zoe asked her aunt if she would consider taking the job, so "Aunt Ottie" accepted and became the station cook.

The fire truck assigned to Newhall Station was a 7 ½ ton International tanker, and was an underpowered beast of a vehicle to drive and operate. It had a five speed transmission and one had to double clutch each shift to get it moving. The vehicle carried 415 gallons of water, 80 gallons of gasoline, had three fully charged hose reels, fire tools, and canteens for ten firefighters. Much credit is due these girls who were among the first women fire fighters in a profession that had been men only.

The all women crew was very effective and remained so until August 1, 1944, when its' disbandment was announced with the end of WW II in sight. All the girls received layoff notices except Zoe who was offered a job for the remaining weeks as a relief fire lookout observer. For a time she relieved personnel in seven different towers in the district.

The above story of Zoe Willis' experiences in the U.S. Forest Service was written by her future co-worker and husband, Edward Schuckert. Now let's hear her story in her own words written in the mid 1990s:

"It has been 55 years since Carol and I worked as Air Warning Observers on Warm Springs Lookout, winter of 1943-1944. In retrospect, I suppose I could say there is, or can be, a romance of a sort from that kind of a life or experience. Then on the other hand, there were moments for us girls where living under winter conditions was anything but romantic. Had it not been that our country was in a world conflict, my and Carol's being at Warm Springs would not have been necessary at all. The fact that our nation had been attacked by the Japanese at Pearl Harbor on December 7, 1941, prompted immediate measures to activate an air warning surveillance program from San Diego to British Columbia. The Japanese demonstrated that they could, and might make a strike against our coastal cities or oil fields. What better use could be found for the Forest Service lookout stations than that of air surveillance. These tiny structures, usually closed during the winter, could now be the eyes on the sky.

There were extreme hardships at times while living on a mountain top, but there were rewarding moments as well. We, Carol and I, accepted the fact what we were doing was essential to the defense of our country and the overall war effort. The primitive life style might have produced boredom or even depression for some, but I never suffered from either of these; I was always busy.

I was 20 years old, un-worldly, quiet but not subdued either. My dad was just the same. I trusted everyone, even

after “being wronged” by them, it was my nature, I guess. I believe that one can make their heaven or hell right here on earth; I mean that with great sincerity. Also, the manner in which one conducts one’s self at an early age will set the tone for the rest of their life.

For Carol and me, coming from the city, working first as firefighters and now on an Air Warning Station, we could have just as well been in Alaska, given the winter conditions and remoteness. Some might ask of me, “What did you gain from living under these circumstances?” Well, I would respond by telling them of those magnificently clear days and beautiful nights when I stood on the catwalk, bundled up to my teeth, hands gripped around my binoculars, in awe of what I was experiencing, panning as though I were a camera, all the while, my vision reaching forty, sixty and upwards of 100 miles. I would tell them of the infinite sphere of the heavens and the unlimited pleasures I derived as I focused first, on one star then another, wondering if I might be seeing the navigational light of an aircraft. As well, I would tell them of the rain, snow, thunder and lightning storms that were frightening and intense. How else would I have known of these things unless I had experienced them, as I did?

We, as with others on various AWS towers during the war endured hardships, but one can harden or soften their circumstances, making conditions relatively pleasant or they can drive themselves into hysteria. Living in the confinement of a 14 X 14 square house; twenty feet above ground, socked in by dense clouds, without any inkling of the number of days until the clouds abate, could be a bit trying. For me, I kept house, if we want to call it a house; I knitted and read books, always however, with an alert ear for the sound of an aircraft engine, warning that my observation space had been penetrated. You might ask whether I became lonesome during the five months. Well, I guess so, but not in the sense that I required affection to satisfy this loneliness. It was more of having someone to talk with, or be around, other than the day in, day out association with your co-worker. Imagine, two females living together for five months, occupying the same work area and tolerating each other’s idiosyncrasies; something we all have. Carol and I got along quite well; our duty was arranged around eight hour shifts which separated us by hours at times. Though we would eat together on occasions, most meals were prepared by ones’ self while the other slept or was out on a hike. These separations most certainly minimized any conflict; there were laughs and good times as well.

Occasionally we saw a deer, or a hawk circling overhead. I can’t say that we saw rabbits, but I remember seeing squirrels and small birds, and I will never forget killing a rattlesnake in the garage. Quail would be seen on hikes to my paradise, a short distance to the west of the tower. I can’t remember seeing a fox or a coyote, not even a bear or a mountain lion. I didn’t give any thought that a mountain lion might jump out of the bushes at me when on hikes. It never entered my mind. After killing the rattler in the garage, I became more cautious and watchful wherever I went.

Military aircraft of all types, from all services, flew up and down the canyons, zooming by the tower at times as though on exhibition, perhaps so. Daytime temperatures crept into low seventies by March and early April when Carol and I took turns sunbathing while lying on one of the window shutters. Those fighter pilots that buzzed the tower before were now circling ever nearer. We thought they were taking in the show; perhaps they were.

“My Paradise,” the Garden of Eden of the Newhall-Saugus Ranger District, was within a mile of the tower, and an easy hike. It was late February or early March when I discovered this, otherwise, inaccessible “find.” Carol and I, frequently scanned the small basin west of our station for any sign of wildlife, or anything that might stimulate interest. Though weather conditions dictated when and how far either of us could hike, the basin remained as

one of those places yet to be explored, and I was ready for the task. The worst of the winter storm season had passed, and now an occasional fair weather cloud would be seen drifting along, seemingly without destination. They are singular and resemble a “cream puff,” usually separated by a half mile or so. It was March by now and time for me to start out on my adventure. I slipped one foot, then the other into my firefighting boots, grabbed a light coat and was on my way to see what could be seen. I used the Forest Service spur road as my path. The Forest Service constructed the spur into the basin years before, probably with CCC workers. It made a nice hiking trail but had not been maintained for vehicles in years. There was a turn-around at the bottom where the road ended. I’ve always been a fast walker and arrived at the bottom in 30 or 40 minutes when I stopped for a look-around before deciding to proceed or call it quits. It never occurred that I might see the tower from my very position, but there it stood; I was looking up at my and Carol’s home, believe it or not. The sight of a lookout station, such as Warm Springs, is impressive. Had I not known its purpose and occupant, I would have felt that the eyes of the forest were watching my every move. It wasn’t discernible from the tower that the basin sloped gently to the north. Neither was it terribly large, perhaps the size of a football field. A tiny trickle of water, mostly from seepage, became the origin of a small stream or creek. It flowed ever so slowly to the west, fed by rivulets. In all, the stream was a couple of feet across and two or three inches deep. I was intrigued by this act of nature and decided to follow it along. There was the semblance of a trail starting at the turn-around, possibly a game trail. It was vague and frequently lost as I walked over the on top of huge rocks. There wasn’t much of anything to follow except the inclination as to what lay ahead. Native grasses were starting to grow, assuring that spring was near. The sound of the creek was scarcely audible, but I know it was still over there, but I wasn’t going to climb into the brush to find it. I continued walking along, watching and listening when I came upon what I named “My Paradise.” Before my very eyes I saw first one pool of water, then another. They were connected by the stream that emerged from under the brush and flowed gently over smooth rocks feeding the two pools. The lower pool was slightly larger than the upper; both however, were large enough to be used as a bathtub or a small wading pool. They measured about 10 feet long, 5 feet wide, and 12 to 15 inches deep; what a discovery!

For the next six weeks, I wore a well defined trail to and from the lookout, with soap and towel in hand, to bath in one of the pools - not having to worry about the amount of water I used.

Edward and Wes [a co-worker] visited Carol and me in April. For some reason, Wes thought I was his girl friend, so most of his attention was directed towards me. I liked Wesley as a friend and nothing more. On this visit, Carol suggested we change partners; she with Wes and “Zoe with Eddie.” This was an unexpected surprise, but

neither of us questioned the idea. My shift wouldn’t start until 8 o’clock, so I asked Eddie if he would like to hike into the basin to see “My Paradise.” He said yes, and in minutes we were on our way. It was a beautiful day, warm with clear skies. It couldn’t have been a more pleasant day for us, besides I was with someone I liked. As we approached the turn-around, a covey of mountain quail scampered across in front of us; there must have

been twelve or so. As we neared, they broke into flight, their wings in high pitch as they fluttered with a burst of speed, landing a hundred or so feet away. Unlike the first time I walked to the basin, shrubs and brush species were now in bloom. The white flower of the Theonosis produced a fragrance unequalled anywhere. Pink flowers found on the Manzanita were beautiful, but their fragrance was dominated by that of the Theonosis. It was as though we were in a flower garden; I guess we were. Honey bees buzzed from blossom to blossom, gathering nectar. There were thousands of them, but we passed unnoticed as they carried on. Overhead, a broad wing hawk circled effortlessly, waiting his chance at a kill.

We were on our way again after marveling about that which we had just experienced, nature at its best, doing its thing. My traipsing to and from the pools had made a well defined trail, one that anyone could follow if they were inclined. We arrived at the paradise within minutes when I pointed at the two pools and the waterfall that fed them, exclaiming, "This is my paradise, isn't it beautiful?"

Eddie was wearing his forest green wool pants, suntan shirt, etc. I was in a skirt and blouse. I kicked off my shoes and said, "I'm going wading to cool my feet, roll up your pants and join me." It was fun, so much fun that I splashed and frolicked like a child. I was the first to splash water, a little then a lot, as the water drenching began. Back and forth until we were thoroughly soaked; what fun, we laughed and laughed. My hair was a mess, but who cared. I removed my wet blouse and skirt, nothing else. Eddie took off his shirt and nothing else, as we dried in the afternoon sun just talking away. We were so busy that neither of us realized that the sun had been hammering away at our exposed skin. My clothes dried nicely, Eddie's shirt was ok, but the rolled up green wool pants had a new press and his legs were terribly sunburned. It was time for us to return to the tower, but we had a great time. I think it was on this venture that I might first have sensed an attraction to Eddie; I wasn't certain, but that could have been the beginning of my caring for him. He was a gentleman and acted much above his age.

There were other trips to the swimming hole, but none with Eddie. For the time, until Carol and I signed off on the official station logbook, I bathed regularly in the pools of water that seemingly were created for me alone, at least this is how I felt when in the presence of "My Paradise."

Ed now resumes the story from here:

"I remained as a firefighter until being elevated to Patrolman in April of 1944, but in September of 1943, I learned the Forest Service was hiring an all-woman firefighting crew. I met Miss Zoe Willis and Miss Carol Bayer, but it was weeks before seeing them again, and then only briefly. I was an instructor at a fire training school in April, 1944, Miss Willis attended this three day session and we got acquainted. I worked out of the Oak Flats station as patrolman, and she had the headquarters station with her crew of girls so I did not see them for some time."

As stated above, the all girl firefighter crew was terminated on August 1, 1944, as well as the Air Warning Service, all due to the war in Europe nearing its' end. The end of the need for 24 hour surveillance caused a number of husband and wife teams to decide to take layoff and seek other work. These openings allowed two of the girls to stay on as regular fire lookouts; Mary Jane Brunnton was assigned to Reservoir Summit Lookout and Zoe Willis became "Lookout Relief" traveling between seven different towers as day off relief. Three of the seven lookout stations on the Newhall/Saugus Ranger District were in Ed's patrol area. With his ability now to visit both girls as part of his job, he had the better of two worlds.

In the summer of 1944 due to wartime shortages of funds and personnel, Ed's duties included supplying the various towers with potable water. Four, 4 gallon containers would just fit in the trunk of his Chevie. Water for dishes, bathing, etc. was pumped by hand from a cistern at the towers. He was expected to use his own vehicle for patrol and travel to the towers, all limited to 500 miles each month at 5 cents per mile allotment.

It was on one of the trips mentioned above that Ed picks up the story: "I hauled water to the Reservoir Summit tower after alerting Mary Jane Brunnton by phone that I was headed her way. After unloading the water, I sat enjoying a cup of Mary Jane's coffee. Tower personnel were anxious to have someone to coffee to visit with and

catch up on all the news. The Forest Service was fussy with record keeping, so Mary Jane had logged my arrival time and purpose into her records. I sipped at my coffee as Mary Jane scanned all points hurriedly before taking her coffee. We spoke for a few minutes when she broke from our conversation exclaiming, "What's that?" She saw a bright flash about 4 miles away but in her surveillance range. The flash from the windshield of a vehicle, a vehicle that was out of place being that the forest was closed. Mary Jane knew that the vehicle was not that of the Southern California Gas Company patrolman because it was not timely and on the wrong day. I thought for a minute or so and decided to phone Newhall Headquarters and request instructions. It was my district and it was necessary that this observation be investigated, but I wanted headquarters to know what was taking place. I spoke with Howard and he told me to proceed and check back. I drove to the head of Fish Canyon road; checked the lock on the gate, all ok but someone was inside on the closed area. I then proceeded along the Fish Canyon truck trail. At that point I had not seen another flash and had no idea where the car would be. In a second or so as I turned a curve, I spotted the car coming in my direction with rifle barrels projecting from both windows. The occupants were so intent on their hunt that they did not see my vehicle until the last second as they turned the corner where I was stopped. There wasn't any way of them passing without seeing me. I had apprehensions but I was not scared. Somehow, whatever the situation, I was going to confront the trespassers to determine the reason for their being in a National Forest closed area.

Their car crept slowly along to directly in front of my position. They were so intent on scanning the slopes that the two vehicles nearly touched before they stopped. It was then that I fully realized the two men were deer poachers. When I saw the gun barrels, I knew that I was in a dangerous situation, which I might not be able to handle safely. I was determined however to pursue the investigation as far as possible without being killed and left by the roadside. The only recognition of me was a sign on the front bumper reading FIRE. I was wearing the Forest Officer badge and introduced myself as a Forest Officer before starting my inquiry to why they were in the closed area. Within seconds they were asking questions of me. Their questioning me wasn't what I wanted when I told them to 'stay put,' which didn't mean a damn thing to these two. 'I was sent here to investigate your presence and others know that I am here.' I believe the two would liked to have driven around my auto, but it was impossible, so they sat while I used my small crystal control radio to contact Newhall headquarters for instructions. Howard Evans told me, 'write them citations and escort them out beyond the gate.' I thought for a second or two asking myself, Howard, is this the best you can do?- no mention of assistance whatever. I realized that I was on my own and that was not healthy. I asked for their IDs, when the two refused and stated that they had written more of 'those,' pointing to the citation book, than I could count. The comment led me to believe they were with law enforcement or possibly 'day off' police on their own special hunt in violation of federal law. The nearest person to me was Mary Jane at Reservoir Summit Lookout, eight road miles away. The absolute fact was I was alone, faced with two poachers who could leave me in the middle of no-where should they desire. I told them again that they needed to leave and that I would follow them out. I'm sure they saw this as an opportunity to avoid any further confrontation knowing that I reported their license plate number to Newhall headquarters. I saw it as a chance to cope with a situation that could have ended in my death.

I was not proud of the outcome since I had been instructed to issue citations and I had not. On the other hand, I survived a difficult, dangerous situation, and the forest was no worse off for how I handled the problem. Later I reported in and Howard growled at me about orders, etc. I didn't like his comments, but I was out of a tough one, one that I care not to be in again. When the District Ranger visited my station he doubted my ability to handle the patrol position. I believed that I did the right things under the conditions, and I felt that he should have complemented me instead of criticizing. In my mind I coped rather than forced a confrontation that I most

certainly would have come out the loser.”

The fire season closed on October 31, 1944, and so did the forest fire lookout stations. Mary Jane Brunnton, age 19, returned to Pasadena, California, where she lived with her parents. Zoe and Ed married on December 5, 1944. Ed was promoted to Fire Suppression Foreman in 1945, even though he was only 20 years old. He resigned from the U.S. Forest Service in June of 1946, and was employed as a Firefighter with the California State Division of Forestry. When Ed reported to his new job with the state, the supervisor in reviewing his record, noted that he had been in the CCC and had fought over 30 fires even then, told him that he already had more experience than just about any of his men, so Ed was made a foreman over a fire crew, now called a Fire Captain. In 1947 after only 18 months with the state, he became a State Forest Ranger. Later Ed was promoted to Forestry Superintendent in Southern California, and transferred to Northern California in 1960. The District Superintendent, or Ranger, was responsible for all or part of three counties. Ed's last fire was a major one; on the Klamath National Forest near the Oregon border. It lasted for 12 days. Even though Ed was with the State of California, it is standard practice for both state and National Forest firefighters to attack a major fire together. He says that he fought from 375 to 450 fires in his life time, with 275 of those being major wildland fires. Ed retired in 1979. In looking back over his career, he tells that he was basically homeless at age 13 and when he went into the CCC, it brought stability to his life. His camp life was anything but pleasant though, with the presence of gangs in camp, very serious fights were all too common; Ed still carries the scar of a knife wound in his leg, and he remembers thinking he broke an assailant's arm. However, the Forest Service men taught him valuable skills; skills that he put to use in his life's work. For instance, when he was assigned to a fire fighting pumper truck, he learned about hydraulics that he put to good use later.

Ed and Zoe had two children, a boy and girl. Zoe died in 2001, and their daughter was killed in a tragic traffic accident a few years ago. Their son now lives not far from Ed. In 1977 the National Association of Civilian Conservation Corps Alumni was formed. It began in California when several former CCC boys decided to hold an area reunion. The response was so great they began the idea of promoting a national organization of CCC vets. Ed was a charter member in that group and is one of the few still around. He has just celebrated his 89th birthday Jan. 8, 2014; family and friends provided a large cake with all the trimmings.

Bill Stallings

The Civilian Conservation Corps Legacy is a non-profit organization dedicated to research, preservation, and education to promote better understanding of the CCC and its continuing contribution to American life and culture. *“I propose to create a Civilian Conservation Corps to be used in simple work, more important, however, than the material gains will be the moral and spiritual value of such work.*

--FDR, 1933

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