U. S. Forest Service
Division of Fire Control
Washington, D. C.
December 19, 1966

SUPPLEMENT NUMBER 1 TO THE LOOP FIRE DISASTER REPORT

When the Loop Fire Analysis Group prepared their report, they made provisions to supplement it if hospitalized survivors were able to provide additional significant information later. Since then, Gordon H. King, Superintendent of the El Cariso Crew, has submitted a statement, copy attached. Mr. King's statement corrects paragraph 6, page 14, but it does not change the remaining narrative, conclusions or recommendations in the report. It contains valuable additional information, especially about the crew's activities between the time the fire crossed the deep gully and when the men were burned.

Paragraph 1, page 11 of the report states that the fire burned for seven minutes in the Chimney Canyon below King before it overran the crew. In his statement, King explains that only 30 seconds elapsed from the time the fire established itself in the canyon until it started to move uphill toward him. Superintendent King's observations were from a point only a few yards from the fire while the time in the report was established from the observations of more distant observers - Captain Hayes, Division Boss Westmoreland and Helicopter Pilot Cook.

At first observation, a conflict in testimony seems present but in fact it is not. What the more distant observers considered to be the build up of the hot spot probably includes the period described in King's statement from the time he first saw the fire below him, including his moves westward and eastward to escape the fire, his experience at the dry waterfall and an unknown part of the time spent by him going eastward to the small drainage and eventually coming out below the fire.

In addition to King's attached statement, Angeles Forest Supervisor William T. Dresser recorded significant information while talking to him. This was confirmed by King and follows.

On reading pages 11 - 18 he (King) has the following comments: He said that on arriving at the "diamond" area he looked into the canyon to the west and could see fire above him on his side of the canyon. This fire was in the rocks and apparently going out. He could also see fire across the canyon from him to the west but apparently burning away from him. Since the terrain was too steep to cold trail from the ridge he was on into the canyon to the west, he decided to carry out the operation described in the last paragraph on page 11 of the report. He saw a helicopter water drop being made on the fire as he looked into the canyon to the west. His impression was that the drop was made from too high up to be of much benefit. As he and his men started down the ridge from the diamond, they encountered a large sumac bush. He, Chee and Moreland worked their way into the Chimney Canyon drainage to try to get this sumac bush removed. They were to work on it from the bottom,

others of the crew from the top. He does not know how the rest of the men got into the Chimney Canyon. He thought they were still on the ridge where the diamond is located. He thinks that the terrific blasts of hot air overcame the men before the fire actually got to them.

Superintendent King also commented on the lineup of his crew shown in Appendix G on the report. He says the lineup was changed as follows before the men went into the chute area. Leak was moved to #14 position from #8; Cosgrove had a shovel instead of a pulaski and was moved to #23 position; S. White to the #8 position; Verdugo to the #9 position; D. Moore to the #10 position; Barnhill to the #11 position; others, such as Chase, were moved around to fill in for the above.

Attachment

STATEMENT OF GORDON H. KING REGARDING THE LOOP FIRE REPORT
Made 12/6/66 at the Hospital of the Good Samaritan Medical Center

"Having read the report of the Loop fire disaster, I found a few items that do not hold true.

"The first paragraph on page 11 states that a hot spot established itself below me and burned for about seven minutes. When I first saw the hot spot it was just starting to take hold. I was about 20 to 30 yards above it. Ray Chee and James Moreland were with me. I told them that I was going down to put it out. Chee and Moreland were widening the line at this point. I moved down about 10 yards when it became apparent to me that I could not handle it. I saw that it was starting to move up canyon towards me. The time involved could not have been seven minutes if this is the same hot spot seen by people on the road. The time factor in my action was about 30 seconds.

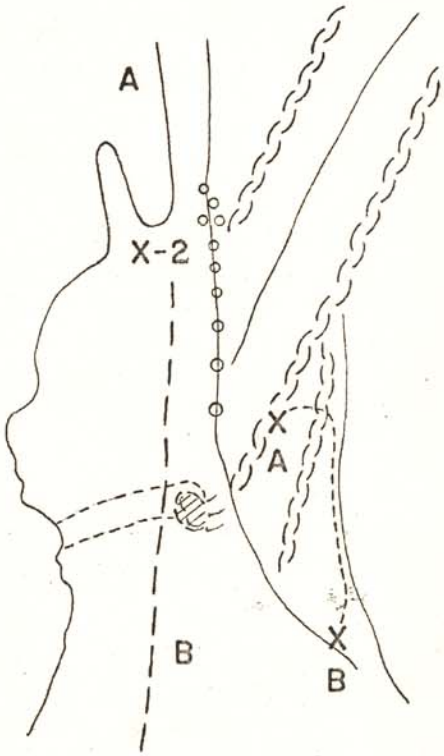
"On page 14 paragraph six the information is incorrect. This is what I did when the hot spot flared up.

"I turned and called to Chee to reverse tool order and move out up to the bench area as shown in (Figure 3, Point C). I saw Chee and Moreland turn and move up slope. I was climbing up towards the crew when I got hit from behind by a hot blast of air, I was climbing on all fours when it hit. I fell forward as the hot air went over me. My first thought was that I was in the fire, but then it got cooler and I turned and looked down and saw that the fire was still below me. I took out my hanky and put it in my mouth and started to climb again. I looked up and could not see any of the crewmen. I went about ten feet when I got hit again by hot air, this time it was much hotter.

"I then realized that I would not be able to reach the crew. I decided to try and get into the burn west of me. I started to do this when I was hit again by this hot air, it forced me to turn to the east to avoid the hot air, as I moved eastward it got cooler. I started to climb while I moved in an eastward direction. I climbed into a small drainage and ran into a dry waterfall about 10 to 12 feet high and nearly vertical. I knew that I could not climb up the waterfall. I looked down at the fire and then I realized that I was trapped and I just sat down and gave up. I saw the fire approach where I was at, when a small bush to my right went up in flames. The heat hit me on the right side of my face. This made me mad. I think I was more mad at myself for giving up then the fact that my face was burned. I remember jumping to my feet and the next thing I remember was that I was standing above the waterfall looking down on the fire. It was then that I noticed my arms were burned. I looked up to where the crew should be but I could not see because of the smoke. I looked back down at the fire and realized that I had to get out of where I was at. I moved

eastward to a small drainage, which had very little brush. Not wanting to fall on my hands, I sat down and slid down the chute to where I could stand up and walk down to where I could get help.

"On Figure 4. The area I was in was just EAST of where Ray Chee was found.



XA = About where the Waterfall was

XB = Where I walked out

/s/ Gordon H. King