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Memorandum

Department of Agriculture—Forest Service
SANTA ANA, CALIFORNIA 92706

TO : Southern Zone Dispatcher, Arcadia

File No.

FROM : Donald H. Marriott, F.C.O.

Date: 12/1/66

SUBJECT: Hot Shot Crews

Your reference:

I vividly recall the MileFire in August, 1961 on the Six Rivers National Forest, a job done by the Del Rosa Hot Shots. On the 3rd, 4th or 5th day of the fire (time ran together on this siege) the Del Rosa Hot Shots incorporated with an overhead team from the Six Rivers and the Harvey Valley inmate crew were assigned to me to pick up the fire on the northside of Red Cap Creek. This combined force built hot line in snags and heavy mixed brush on a south slope for two days and two nights. Twenty chains of this line was on 90 to 110% slopes and underslung. Had the fire escaped this line there was no control point for two airline miles that could have been used. The lead man on this team during the second day would go until he passed out. The next man took over lead position and the exhausted lead man was given water and helped back to work with the holding crew. This occurred many times during this siege. The heavy mixed brush here was tan oak, manzinita mixed with snow brush, stems averaged 3 to 4" in diameter and height of brush 10 feet to 20' high. Snags remaining from the 1937 Red Cap Fire were thick. Rolling logs, chunks of snags and widowmakers made this area sound like a continual incoming artillery barrage. The combined crews worked together without a hitch, relieved each other, assisted and completed their assignments with enthusiasm after spending many days on fire before hitting this piece of ground.

Lineboss - Don Marriott

On the Mendicino National Forest, 1962, a brush fire was being hit by the El Cariso Hot Shots. As trainee line boss with Line Boss Glenn Smith (D.R.), we had just made a trip through the area in front of the crew building line. On the way back we passed along the crew and I noted their excellent physical condition and attitude of the crew. I also watched the first hot spotting team hit a bad flare up which was hit hard and aggressively, quite matter of factly. A little later the fire made a run on the north flank. The Hot Shots were in a difficult position in the drainage bottom with fire on three sides and no visibility. Supt. King and Assistant Supt. Marvin Stout held the crew and asked Smith by radio for directions. Glenn advised the crew to move out downstream, there was immediate, calm acknowledgement and the crew moved down canyon to come out a mile below. Just prior to the flare up, I had observed King bring out one of their men who had passed out from heat exhaustion. The crew then, as now, hits their objective hard and maintains an excellent rapport with line overhead.

The Indian Fire on the El Cariso Home District was a typical example of two Hot Shot crews working in harmony. El Cariso, the first handline crew to arrive made and excellent initial attack on this fire which started in a saddle of the Main Divide. With fire on both sides of the divide the crew's decision to pick up fire on the lieu slope was correct. It took three starts and some running up the road before an anchor point was finally established. The crew worked hard, quietly and completed their assignments and moved on to tackle another 100 chains of line. Evidence of the crew's

accomplishments may be made by checking construction of held line. The Del Rosa crew and El Cariso crew completed over half of the handline on this fire.

Donald H. Marriot
District Fire Control Officer