NOV 9 1966

FOREST SERVICE NEWS

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November 2, 1966

FOREST FIRE CLAIMS TEN LIVES

Ten experienced Forest Service firefighters from the El Cariso Hot Shot crew lost their lives yesterday while fighting the "Loop" Fire on the Angeles National Forest. Fifteen additional members of this crew also received burn injuries as a result of a sudden flare up on the fire line.

The El Cariso Hot Shot crew from the Cleveland National Forest arrived at the fire at approximately 2:00 p.m. and were assigned to combat the east flank of the fire. This section of the fire line is located about 1/2 mile south of Pacoima Dam on the west side of Pacoima Canyon. About 4:00 p.m. an unexpected increase in the fire intensity trapped the twenty-five man crew on a steep, rocky hillside. Of the 15 crewmen who were injured, six were described as critical, three as serious, two as fair, and one as good. Three of the Forest Service crewmen were released after treatment.

The "Loop" fire started about 5:30 a.m. on Tuesday, November 1, 1966, during extreme fire weather conditions. Strong, gusty winds were the primary cause of the erratic behavior of the fire. At the time of the accident, the fire had burned 1,900 acres. The fire was contained as of 10:00 a.m. on November 2, 1966.

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LOOP FIRE ANALYSIS GROUP NAMED

Today Chief Edward P. Cliff of the Forest Service, U.S.D.A. directed a top level Fire Analysis Group to study the disastrous fire on the Angeles National Forest which claimed the lives of ten Forest Service firefighters yesterday and burned 12 others seriously. He has charged the team of experts to make a thorough and comprehensive analysis of the circumstances and situations relating to this tragedy and to prepare a complete report.

Chief Cliff said that he and the Forest Service people everywhere are deeply shocked and distressed by the loss of these men. "While we mourn the loss and our hearts go out in sympathy to their families, we cannot bring them back," Cliff said.

"We can, however, do everything in our power to learn from this tragedy and to see that such suffering is never again caused by similar conditions."

He pointed out that the bulk of the job of fighting forest and brush fires is still "hard, dirty, dangerous work done by men on foot -- even in this age of modern equipment, aircraft and scientific methods."

The Fire Analysis Group will be headed by Hamilton K. Pyles, Forest Service Deputy Chief, Programs and Legislation, Washington, D.C. Other members include Alfred E. Spaulding, Deputy Regional Forester, Pacific Northwest Region, Portland, Oregon, Carl C. Wilson, Fire Research Specialist, Pacific Southwest Forest and Range Experiment Station, Riverside, California and William R. Moore, Division of Fire Control, Washington, D.C.

Mr. Cliff noted that these men were selected for their technical ability and proven judgment in fire control. The group will begin its analysis right away. Los Angeles County Fire Chief Keith Clinger has appointed Chief George Brunton to participate in the analysis.

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