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November
1, 2000

SMOKE SIGNALS



A Publication of the Grand Ronde Tribe

www.grandronde.org

November 1, 2000

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Holiday Closures

The Grand Ronde Health and Wellness Center and Tribal offices will be closed the following days:

- Friday, November 10 to honor Veterans' Day
- Wednesday, November 22 Tribal Restoration Day
- Thurs. & Fri., Nov. 23 & 24 Thanksgiving Holiday

Gathering of Warriors Chemawa Veteran's Pow-Wow

November 11, 2000

Grand Entry 1:00 pm & 7:00 pm
Chemawa Indian School Gymnasium
Vendor Info: call Karen at 503-399-5721, ext. 225

Grand Ronde Restoration Celebration

Sunday, November 19

Grand Ronde Elementary School
Lunch served from noon to 1 p.m.
Pow-wow from 2 to 6 p.m.

Grand Ronde Tribal Christmas Party

Saturday, December 9

Tribal Community Center

11am-noon Photos with Santa for children 10 & under
Noon Meal
1:15pm Singing by Tribal Preschool Head Start and Before & After children
Adult Drawings for food baskets & flowers

Sponsored by the Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde Tribal Council.

Fighting Fire with Fire

■ Lynn Robertson returns to Grand Ronde after four months.



By Justin Phillips

With 1,200 hours of over-time in four months, Tribal member Lynn Robertson returns from the Inter-agency Hotshot Firefighting Crew (IHC). Robertson worked throughout Washington, Wyoming, Colorado, Utah, Nevada, Idaho and Oregon.

Robertson's firefighting crew consisted of 20 individuals. He said the crew would go to bed about four or five in the morning and get up about eight and start all over again. They worked an average of 18 hours a day. For every two weeks worked, they got one day off, or every three weeks worked they got two days off.

"It was a lot of hard work, but it's worth it because we got a lot of community support from the people whose homes we were saving," says Robertson.

Sleeping bags would be flown or drove in and they slept next to the fire most of the time.

"What was good about our crew, is we got to build more fires than we put out," said Robertson. "We got to initiate the tactics of fighting fire with fire."

The process consists of burning out land in front or by the fire, producing "safety zone," so when the fire reaches the burned out areas, there is no place for it to burn anymore.

The crew was flown into various places with a helicopter, which would otherwise be unreachable by foot because of the rough terrain. Robertson said they were always thankful when the helicopter was around for their advantage.

When the fire takes a turn for the worst, Robertson's crew was equipped with cell phone to call in air support, in which retardant was dropped on the fire. Sometimes some of the crew got "painted" with the retardant also.

The favorite thing Robertson liked to do is cutting trees. "Anything having to do with chain saws I really like," says Robertson. "It was the most physical thing you could do."

The crew also attended classes when not in the field to continue his firefighting training.



Grand Ronde Tribal member and Firefighter Lynn Robertson (top left) took four months out his life to participate in an elite firefighting crew that battled blazes in several states. Out of control fires plagued many Western States throughout the summer and Robertson's crew spent much of that time on the front lines of the fight — many times catching what sleep they could get right next to the fires. The dramatic photo by Robertson above shows a stand of trees in full blaze.

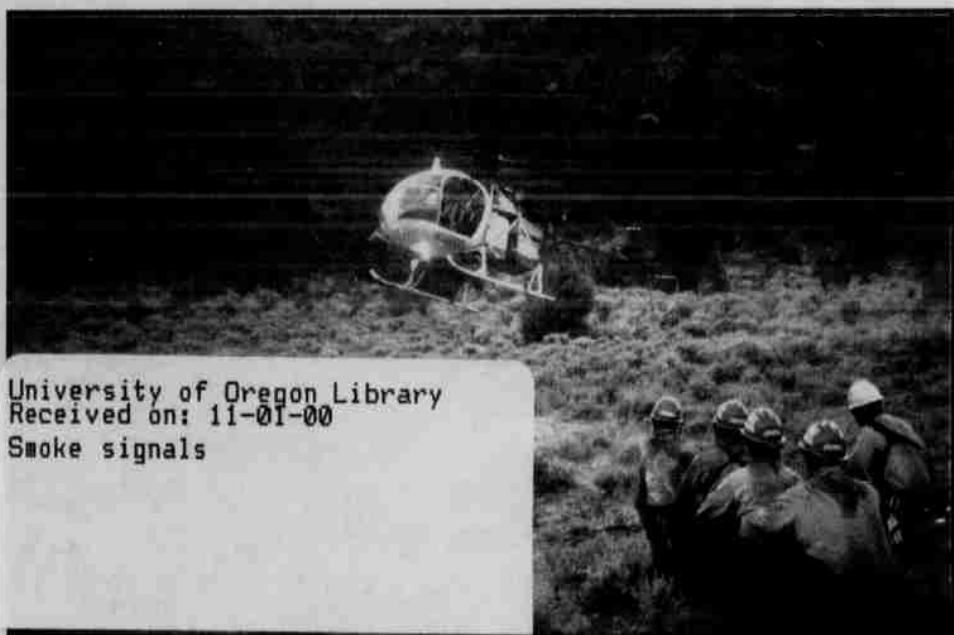
Robertson missed the last two weeks because a tree snag fell and hit him on the head and top of his shoulder. Parts of his vertebrae and neck compressed tearing some muscles.

"All in all this was a good experience and made a lot of good friends while I was there," says Robertson. "I enjoyed it while I was there, but my loyalty is still here with the Tribe and the people I work with here."

Robertson has worked for the Tribe's Natural Resources department for five years as a technician in the silviculture and protection program.

He would like to send special thanks Karen Larsen, Cliff Adams, Jeff Kuust and his girlfriend Jennifer while he was away.

Photos courtesy of Lynn Robertson



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Smoke signals

The Hotshot crew waits to get on a helicopter to take them to the next fire.

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