



AIRWARD NEWS

In Recognition of Professional Performance during a Hazardous Aviation Event or Significant Contribution to Aviation Mishap Prevention

September 2004

Melson Maintains Control In A Rough Situation



Dana Shuford, Burns BLM District Manager, right presenting award to Andy Melson, left.

Andy Melson was making a retardant drop on the Tennant fire near Burns, Oregon in his M-18 Dromader, when he noticed the aircraft did not respond to the throttle settings he had selected. Immediately after his drop and as he applied full throttle for climb out, he noticed there was no response from the engine. Realizing the critical nature of the power loss at such a low altitude, he immediately selected a course of action to put the aircraft down on the safest possible terrain. With only partial power, and no way to control it, he selected a sage flat to his right side. Maneuvering to land he realized the frozen power setting prevented him from slowing the aircraft down with the throttle alone, so he shut off the fuel to the engine. He managed to control the aircraft as it bounced through the rough terrain, cutting through a wire fence line and shearing off the tail wheel. Andy's quick thinking and superior flying skills contributing significantly to the successful outcome from what could have been a catastrophic accident. Great Job Andy. [SAFECOM 04-617](#)

Sotherlund Gives The Shirt Off His Back To Injured

After taking off from the Cle Elem airport, a fixed wing went down about a quarter of a mile from the airport. Chris Sotherlund was staged at the airport for initial attack. A Department of Natural Resources employee informed Chris of what had happened and asked him to help. Chris ran and got his PPE, jumped in the vehicle and took off to the accident scene. Upon arrival, they found the airplane upside down with the right wing sheered off. He pulled the survivors from the aircraft and gave his shirt to one of the injured for a blanket. No SAFECOM Submitted.



Steve Baumann, Forest Aviation Officer, right, presenting award to Chris Sotherlund, left

Great Interception Saves The Day



Pete Soderquist, District Fire Management Officer, left, presenting award to Wayne Reggitore, right. John Newcom, District Ranger in back.

Wayne Reggitore, an engine supervisor on the Methow Valley Ranger District was sent to the Swamp Creek helispot to assess and perform dust abatement in preparation for initial attack on a new fire. He had been monitoring the air to ground frequency, knowing there were several other aircraft working in the area, including a type 1 helicopter, airtanker, leadplane and air attack. When Wayne arrived at the helispot he saw a private helicopter, working for a local mining operation preparing to take off. Wayne recognized the hazard and took assertive action to contact the pilot and make sure he under-

stood what was developing in the airspace he intended to use. As a result of his actions, the helicopter was held on the ground until the airspace was clear and the pilot had the frequencies to communicate with fire suppression resources. Wayne's awareness and actions mitigated a potentially serious situation. Nice interception Wayne, THANKS. No SAFECOM submitted.



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