



Category: 3g Sask was First

Name: Smoke Jumpers

Location: Prince Albert

Species: N/A

Link 1: http://archives.cbc.ca/IDC-1-75-849-4919/science_technology/forest_fir

History/Description:

Canada's first Smoke Jumper program was started in Saskatchewan in 1947.

The first year the Head-quarters were in Prince Albert. After a fire at their training hanger in 1947, they were re-located to La Ronge and remained there.

The Department of Natural Resources (DNR) employed and trained them, and used them for speedy initial attack and suppression of forest fires. The team of eight men attended the physically demanding training school before being deployed on fires. They jumped from Norseman aircraft as directed by the "jump master" to land as close to the fire as they could. They remained until the fire was under control, or until they were relieved by ground forces. In the former case they sometimes had to walk out 25 miles to a suitable pick-up spot - being a lake or the nearest road - where a float plane or truck could meet them.

The program ran from 1947 until 1967 when it was disbanded. By then access by road and by helicopter was much improved.

As it was a summer job, some of the Smoke Jumpers were students who later graduated to pursuits ranging from MLA (and Minister of the Department), to a surgeon.

The attached link is a 30 minute clip from the CBC archives. If it does not show for you, search the CBC archives site for "forest fires", click on topic 1, clip 3.

Nominated By: Murray Little

Comments or additional information can be sent to: info@whitebirch.ca