

# The PRVFD Journal



Volume 1

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## CHIEF'S CORNER

"WHAT A RIDE" BY Larry Pearsall



What a remarkable journey we have had since our inception four and a half years ago. That's when it all started with nine novice firefighters and "old engine number one". Little did we know, or even dream, that we would become a full fledged, trained, Fresno County fire department with thirty three members and five fire engines. The reason this happened is two fold. First, the dedication, enthusiasm and perseverance of our members that continue to attend calls, training sessions and participate in all PRVFD activities. Second, the support of our community, neighboring fire departments, the High-

way 168 Fire Safe Council and Fresno County. Without this support we would not be where we are today. What a ride we have had! And the best part is, we are still moving forward at full speed. Who knows what's ahead for us. I can tell you this, we will accept the challenges as they come and be ready for whatever the future holds. We always need suggestions, ideas and even criticism to continue to develop in an efficient manner. We solicit comments from all our residents and supporters. The Pine Ridge community is such a beautiful and wonderful place to live. I'm so glad that I find myself in a position to help

protect it and make it a safer and even better place to live. It has been, and continues to be, a sincere privilege and honor to lead this wonderful PRVFD organization. I am excited as I look forward to our future. **We are committed to serving our community.**

**Thank you all for your continuing support.**

Larry Pearsall is Chief of the PRVFD  
He can be reached at 559-841-7774 or prvfd@netptc.net

## THE PETERSON FIRE CDF REPORT HIGHLIGHTS

The Peterson Fire was a wild land fire reported at 1205 hours on July 12, 2004 in Eastern Fresno County. As the initial attack Incident Commander, Battalion Chief Jim Smith, arrived at the scene, he found the fire rapidly spreading uphill threatening structures



above and on each flank. The fire was burning in a mix of chaparral and timber mid slope on a south aspect. Fuel moistures from surrounding counties indicate that the current fuel moistures were at least one month ahead of normal and were at or near

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## PETERSON FIRE REMEMBERED TWO DRAMATIC ACCOUNTS OF THE PETERSON FIRE

### “THEY HELD THEIR GROUND” by USFS Chief David Cooper

On July 12, 2004 I was assigned as Branch Director on the Peterson Fire, with the responsibilities of supervising the Fire Suppression resources in the Cressman area. A portion of the resources were from Company 68. We encountered some extreme fire behavior, some crowning, torching, flame lengths over 100 feet with multiple spots. I have worked with volunteer fire departments from all over the country and many times when they witness similar fire behavior they became dysfunctional, they leave the scene or become very un-organized. When we had 100 foot flame lengths behind the Anderson residence, the Pine Ridge Volunteer Fire Department held their post and completed the job they were assigned, laying and pumping hose lays, supporting other hose lays with



water, patrolling for spots, lookouts etc. Pine Ridge Volunteers worked well in and around the other Fire Departments and Fire Agencies. The Department was key to the success we accomplished that night. They were well organized and showed a lot of professionalism. In my position I need to be able to depend on the resources that have been assigned to me on an incident for the safety of themselves and others around them. The Pine Ridge Volunteer Fire Department, Company 68, is a group I can depend on and look forward to working with on an incident some time in the future.

David L. Cooper  
Battalion Chief  
Assistant Fire Management Officer  
High Sierra Ranger District  
Sierra National Forest  
USDA Forest Service



### “GET OUT” by Cindy Holeman

On Monday, July 12, 2004 the residents of Cressman Road had one of their worst nightmares become a reality. A fire started on Peterson Road. When I arrived home the air was already smoky. I called my husband and he immediately started home. Then I called the Forest Service and spoke with a friend who said those dreaded words, Get Out! What do you pack? We have lived here for twenty five years. Clothes, pictures, important papers, money and the list can go on and on. The dog and what about the pigs? I put the sprinkler on the porch and drove away, with the dog of course, not knowing if our home would be there when I got back. A CDF truck was at the top of the road and headed down the driveway. He stopped and asked if anyone else was home? “Don’t come back” he said. My husband and some friends made it in before they closed the road. Our boys and their friends ran in to try and help save our property. I sat at Cressman store and prayed. The thoughts that go through your mind are amazing. You remember all of the places you sat and watched the sunset. The trees the boys use to climb. You wish you had raked a little

further this year. Why didn’t we clear the brush back farther? Finally about 8:00 PM my family drove out. The house is safe for now. We went to a hotel, showered and cried! We tried to sleep but that didn’t work. We got up about 3:00 AM and talked, worried and wondered what now? Thankfully, by the grace of God, a wind change and 571 fire and emergency personnel, our homes on Cressman Road were saved. When we got home the fire had come within 50 feet of our house. We had track marks in the asphalt on our road from a bulldozer. We had a fire line in the back yard that stretched all the way to Peterson road; 8 engines in the front yard and one heck of a fuel break on the east side of our home. If it hadn’t been as clear as it was around our house, we would have lost our home. We have since done more brushing. We hope the State of California will use the clearing that CDF, the Fire Safe Council and PRPOA have done on Cressman Road as an example for other mountain areas around the state.

Cindy Holeman is a long time resident of Cressman Road.



## CHIEF'S AWARD

### RANGER MARTIN RECEIVES FIRST CHIEF'S AWARD

Larry Pearsall, Chief of the Pine Ridge Volunteer Fire Department (PRVFD), recently had the pleasant duty of awarding the Chief's Award to Sue Martin. Martin is a member of the PRVFD Road Rangers. The Road Rangers are an integral part of the volunteers. They do not fight fires, in most cases, but are a support group. They wait at intersections to let emergency responders know the direction to take, they make food for firefighters, call in spot fires, staff telephones to warn local residents and take on many other duties in time of emergency. According to Pearsall, Martin was at work when the July 12<sup>th</sup> wildland fire started on Peterson Road and quickly traveled uphill towards Lower Cressman Road where she lives. Martin left work and hurried home. At about the same time she arrived at home, she saw a spot fire building near her

home. She reported the fire on her radio, then grabbed a shovel and garden hose and went to work attacking the fire. Help soon arrived. She spotted a second fire and re-reported it, then stood by and directed the firefighters to the location. A helicopter responded to that one. A third fire was also reported by Martin. According to Pearsall, 30 fire fighters responded to that one. When enough firefighters were in the area to take care of the spot fires, she went home and began to make sandwiches and gather up sodas for the crews. She

delivered food and drink to all of the engines on Lower Cressman Road. All told, she made over 50 tuna sandwiches, 48 muffins (cut in half), 20 cans of soda and over 100 cups of coffee. Always in her orange vest and hard hat, and carrying her radio, she delivered the food on her quad. She made her last delivery around 11:30 pm. The fire began in the early afternoon and most of the firefighters had no evening meal. Many of them stated that her food was the only food they saw, and it sure tasted good. Martin spent over one hundred dollars restocking food

in case of another fire; she was ready to do the same thing over-again if needed. Pearsall commented, "Throughout the entire afternoon and evening she kept a cool head, was very calm, and acted in a professional manner. She was giving of her time, and demonstrated unselfish dedication to all the firefighters and to our department." He went on to say "this is not easy to do when spot fires are 30 feet from your home. She is an inspiration and role model for all of us to look up to" he concluded. This is the first Chief's Award given by PRVFD. The award will be presented to members who, like Martin, perform above and beyond their routine duties.

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**Sue Martin & Larry Pearsall**

## PINE RIDGE FIREFIGHTERS

### THE GENE VAN DYNE STORY

By Royella Van Dyne

Gene Van Dyne was born in Fresno on October 21, 1935. As a boy, his family came to the Sierras to camp, fish, and hunt. He has always loved the mountains. When his dad returned from duty following World War II, they moved to Gabs, Nevada for about a year. His family returned to California in 1947 and bought property on Lower Cressman Road (the apple or-

chard), now owned by Frank and Denise Herrick. Gene attended Sierra Elementary and graduated from Sierra High School in 1954. Following graduation he enlisted in the Air Force. After Basic Training at Parks AFB, Ca, he attended the Electronic School at Kessler AFB,



**Gene Van Dyne**

Mississippi. He served on several AFB bases in the United States. In 1955 he was present for the Atom Bomb testing on Enimtok in the Marshall Islands. He also served a year at the Thule, Greenland, a year at Da Nang, Vietnam, and a year in Kunsan, Korea. He re-

tired from the Air Force on August 31, 1977 when Gene and Royella moved to their home on Lower Cressman Road. In 1986, Gene and Pete Satterstrom, Floyd Wisecarver, and Bob Silva bought a 1953 fire truck from the Auberry Volunteer Fire Department. It was never needed for fire fighting and after sitting deteriorating for

*(Continued on page 6)*

## OLD FIRE ENGINE NUMBER 1

This vehicle, a 1953 Ford F600, was originally purchased by the State of California Division of Forestry and Fire Protection (CDF). This was referred to as a "Type 4" wildland fire fighting engine. It was a new innovation at the time because it had two unique qualities. It had four-wheel drive and "Pump and Run" capability. The four-wheel drive mechanism was a very special system added as an after market modification done at the time the truck was assembled as a fire fighting unit. The original

chassis was a F600 with a six cylinder engine and two-wheel drive. It was modified by the addition of a Marmon-Harrington four-wheel drive system. In addition to these special features this truck had a new and exciting feature. That was the ability to "Pump and Run" during a wildland fire. This was made possible by the use of a water pump that is powered by its own single cylinder gas engine. Most modern engines cannot do this even today. Because the pump is

*(Continued on page 7)*



**Old Engine Number 1**



**Gene Jundt**

## RECENT INCIDENTS

On 10/16/04 at 2350 hours, we had a small lightning strike on Glenwood Lane. Lighting struck a tree and started a small fire at the base. Pearsall, Dave & Mike Banton, Colbert and van Loon responded with P68 and extinguished the fire. CDF 4352 also responded but the fire was out when they arrived. We all started home when a 2<sup>nd</sup> fire was spotted about 500 feet off the road. On 10/17/04 at about 0100 hours we attacked the 2<sup>nd</sup> vegetation fire of the evening. 4352 was recalled along with Blasingham 4362 and water tender 60 from Shaver Lake. A full call was put out to PRVFD and four additional firefighters and E368 re-

sponded. A total of 18 firefighters were on scene. E368 nursed 4352 and WT60 nursed E368. We pumped about 2700 gallons of water. The fire was in very rugged, rocky terrain with heavy fallen timber on the ground. 1200 feet of 1 ½" and 1" hose was laid to the fire ground. 150 feet of 2 ½" hose was used to supply the Pumper. Rangers Martin and van Loon also responded and guided units in. They then patrolled the area looking for additional fires. The fire was extinguished at 0300 hours. It was a long, cold and wet night. Our people were again commended by the IC. Everyone performed in an exemplary manner.

## IN MEMORY OF GENE JUNDT

**By Warren Colbert**

On December 16, 2002 the Pine Ridge Fire Department suffered its first loss. Gene Jundt, a charter member of our department, passed away. Gene will always be fondly remembered by our Department because of his many contributions and because he was a dear friend. Born on November 30, 1930 in McPherson, South Dakota, he often talked about his childhood in the mid west. He told stories of living in a converted box car and having many chores to do around the farm, to keep his family together. Gene will always be known as "Our Welder". He was the best!! He was actually a "Jack Of All Trades" and **Master Of All**.

He was always willing to tackle any job and always with a smile. Gene was a very gentle man with lots of energy who was always smiling, especially when we had a pot luck dinner. Gene was first in line for the meal and usually the last in line. In spite of his enormous appetite, he was always thin. He and his wife Joyce enjoyed building and adding on to their home on Upper Cressman Road. They also enjoyed many trips in their travel trailer. The Jundt's had six sons and if they all ate like Gene, Joyce must have been a busy cook. **Gene is sorely missed by all his friends, family and brother firefighters.**

## NONPROFIT STATUS

Pine Ridge Volunteer Fire Department (PRVFD) is now an Internal Revenue Code 501(c) (3) nonprofit charitable organization. Due to this preferred nonprofit status, PRVFD is exempt from both federal and

state income tax. Additionally, PRVFD is now eligible to apply for various grants only open to 501(c) (3) organizations. Being a 501(c) (3) nonprofit charitable organization also means that every dollar you donate to

our fire department is deductible on your income tax return. As always, your donations are accepted throughout the year. They help us maintain our vehicles, equipment, etc, in proper working order so

whenever you have an emergency we can respond promptly.

**Donations can be mailed to PRVFD, 38018 Glenwood Lane, Shaver Lake, CA 93664.**

## THE LEGEND OF THE “OFFB”

Author Unknown

One dark night outside a small town, a fire started inside the local chemical plant and in a blink it exploded into flames. The alarm went out to the fire departments for miles around. When the volunteer

fire fighters appeared on the scene the chemical company president rushed to the fire chief and said, “All of our secret formulas are in the vault in the center of the plant, they

must be saved. I will give \$50,000 to the fire department that brings them out intact”. Soon more fire departments had to be called in as the situation became desperate. As the fireman arrived, the president shouted out “that the offer was now \$100,000 to the fire department who could bring out the company’s secret files”. From the distance, a lone siren was heard as another fire truck came onto sight. It was the nearby rural township volunteer fire department composed of men over the age



of 65. To everyone’s amazement, the little old fire engine passed all the newer sleek engines parked outside the plant and drove straight into the middle of the inferno. Outside, the other fireman watched as the old timers jumped off their truck and began to fight the fire with a performance and effort never seen before.

Within a short time, the old timers had extinguished

the fire and saved the secret formulas. The grateful chemical company president joyfully announced that for such a super-human feat he was upgrading the reward to \$200,000, and walked over to personally thank each of the brave, though elderly, fire fighters. The local TV news reporters rushed in after capturing the event on film asking, “What are you going to do with all that money?” Well, said the 70-year old fire chief, “the first thing we are going to do is fix the brakes on that old truck!”

## SMOKEY BEAR AWARD

By Howard V. Hendrix

On a sunny day in autumn of 2003, I was lucky enough to participate in a ceremony at CDF’s fire-safe landscape gardens near Friant Dam and Millerton Lake. That day, the Pine Ridge Property Owners Association (PRPOA) was being honored with a bronze Smokey the Bear award, and I was there as PRPOA president. Only a handful of organizations nationally were recognized with this award. Despite the beauty of the ceremony, however, I felt something was slightly amiss. My wife Laurel and I are members not only of PRPOA, but also of the Pine Ridge Volunteer Fire Department (PRVFD). I have always felt that half the credit for that bronze Smokey Bear award should go to the PRVFD. The truth of that was forcefully brought home to me during the Peterson Fire of 2004. You never know when you might be staring at a hundred foot high wall of flames headed your way, wishing you had a fuel break and crews of trained local firefighters willing and determined to put in the

long hours to fight that blaze. Fortunately we have both. Every time I drive down Lower Cressman Road and see the blight of blackened trees and ground come to a stop on the other side of my property, I know that two organizations

should be named on that Smokey the Bear award: PRPOA and PRVFD. They are the left and right hands of the effort that made our tract a safer place. All of us in Pine Ridge should be proud of the work

both of those hands have accomplished together. If people and forests are to safely coexist with fire in the mountains and foothills of the Sierra, then Pine Ridge tract will have to be less a special case and more the norm. Everything that has been accomplished in our tract can also be achieved in scores of other communities that dot the western slope of the Sierra. Not only can it be done—it must be done.

Howard Hendrix is an educator and science fiction author.



## WINTER SAFETY TIPS

Remember, our PRVFD is very limited in the winter months. CDF is also very limited during non fire season. For these reasons we must all be especially aware during the winter. Please be careful and remember some simple rules:

- Make sure no combustibles are near the furnace, wood stove or water heater.
- Have your stovepipe and flu cleaned annually.
- Make sure you have a good spark arrestor screen on your stovepipe or chimney.
- Test and change the battery in your smoke alarm.
- Test and change the battery in your carbon monoxide detector.
- Leave at least one window opened a small amount at all times.
- Don't use kitchen stoves or ovens for heating.
- Be extra careful of candles and other open flame lighting devices.

### Happy Holidays

#### *(Gene Van Dyne Continued from page 3)*

several years; the owner's donated the fire engine to the Pine Ridge Property Owner's Association on April 12, 2000. From there Larry Pearsall took on the task of restoring the fire truck. After numerous hours by many men of the Pine Ridge Volunteer Fire department (PRVFD), the truck was restored to operational condition. This truck restoration became a true beginning for a remarkable fire department. Never did Gene think the PRVFD would grow to its

current state. Gene is proud to be a charter member.

Gene is always willing to lend a helping hand. Royella says "He can do anything he sets his mind to." He likes to take things apart to see what makes them work. He met Royella in 1972 at Sheppard AFB., Texas. Together they enjoy fishing, camping, and traveling. They have spent their winters on Lake Mead since 1981, what else – fishing. They just returned from a two month fishing trip to British Columbia and Alaska. Gene has one

#### *(Peterson Fire Continued from page 1)*

critical levels. The fire was rapidly spreading towards the recently completed Cressman Road Fuel Modification Zone (FMZ). US Forest Service Battalion Chief, David Cooper observed the fire behavior as the fire approached the FMZ. He stated that the fire was torching in single trees with short crown runs as it approached the FMZ. Once the fire reached the FMZ the fire dropped to the surface and ground fuels and slowly spread through the FMZ until it reached Cressman Road. He also stated that there were in excess of 20 spot fires at the head of the fire. Most of the spot fires occurred in the FMZ and were easily extinguished. One of the spot fires occurred along the left shoulder of the fire, outside of the FMZ. This spot fire grew to approximately one acre before it was noticed and extinguished. Battalion Chief David Cooper also observed incredible teamwork by the newly formed Pine Ridge Volunteer Fire Department personnel and the various paid and volunteer fire departments that responded to the fire. He felt that the close working relationship and preparedness training that the Pine Ridge Volunteer fire Department has conducted with CDF and US Forest Service through

the Highway 168 Fire Safe Council paid off. The Cressman Road FMZ has now been tested and was a success. The project was designed to provide safe ingress of fire suppression personnel and equipment while allowing for the safe egress of residents. The project was not designed to stop a fast moving high intensity fire but to provide for the opportunity to stop a low to moderate intensity fire. Many have asked if the Cressman Road FMZ stopped the Peterson Fire. The answer is that it did exactly what it was designed to do and that it allowed the opportunity to stop the fire by providing a relatively safe area to work from. The Cressman Road FMZ did not stop the Peterson Fire by itself, but became a tool that the Incident Commander was able to utilize to help stop the fire.

For further information on the Peterson Incident visit the CDF web site: <http://www.fire.ca.gov> These highlights were reprinted with the permission of CDF.

son, two grandchildren, and two great-grand children who all live in Fresno.

Royella Van Dyne is a PRVFD Road Ranger and long time resident of Lower Cressman Road.

**(Old Engine Number 1  
Continued from page 4)**

independently powered, the truck can move in any direction and at any speed and still provide water for fire fighting purposes. This allows “mobile attack” on wildland fires. Because of the short wheel base, four wheel drive capability, modern flat head six cylinder engine and “Pump and Run” capability, it was considered one of the most effective pieces of fire fighting equipment of it’s time. E68 had its assignment in the Owens Valley of Southern California. It had a crew of four firefighters. It

served well as a key piece of equipment for many fire seasons with CDF. It was later acquired by the Auberry VFD where it served well for many more years. It was finally purchased by several Pine Ridge residents and used to move logs. It had been sitting out in the weather for over ten years when the PRVFD was organized and the owner’s donated it to the new Department. Old “Engine Number 1” was completely rejuvenated; a modern V-8 engine installed and christened E68. It is on-line today and completely equipped and operational.



**PRVFD 1999**

**Back row, L/R -** Glenn Clayton, Oly Schales, Ephiram Bosse, Howard Hendrix, Gene Jundt  
**Front Row, L/R -** Warren Colbert, Larry Pearsall, George Lewis **Not Pictured -** Les Moore



**PRVFD 2004**

**Back Row, L/R -** Larry Pearsall, Michael Banton, Kurt Vaughn, George Lewis, Hank van Loon, Lisbeth Bundli, Howard Hendrix, Laurel Hendrix, Glenn Clayton, Joe Ubbink, Abb Adkisson, Warren Colbert, Gary Martin, Larry Cobb, Gene Van Dyne  
**Front Row Seated L/R -** Trudy Colbert, Sharon Moore, Virginia Pearsall, Jan Cobb, Royella Van Dyne  
**Not Pictured -** Dave Banton, Melanie Banton, Nicole Banton, Tina Cheney, Caryl Clayton, Doris Lewis, Sue Martin, Les Moore, Oly Schales, Dory van Loon



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## HAPPY HOLIDAYS



## CONTRIBUTIONS AC- KNOWLEDGED

Auberry Volunteer Fire Department  
Bald Mountain Fire Protection District  
Big Creek Volunteer Fire Department  
California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CDF)  
Clovis City Fire Department  
The County of Fresno  
Cressman's Store  
Federal Emergency Management Agency  
Fresno County Sheriff Department  
Fresno City Fire Department  
The Highway 168 Fire Safe Council  
Huntington Lake Volunteer Fire Department  
Layton Volunteer Fire Department  
Shaver Lake Volunteer Fire Department  
Sierra High School  
Southern California Edison Company  
United States Forest Service  
One specific anonymous donation  
Many Individual Donors

**THANK YOU ...**