

Firefighter Fatalities in the 1910 Big Blowup

August 19th-21st

The following names were taken and cross-checked from numerous sources but are not believed to be comprehensive nor completely accurate. Employment practices by the U.S. Forest Service at the time, combined with the ongoing emergency and the loss of timebooks during entrapments make exact identification of all victims impossible.

An asterisk (*) indicates assumed, not actually stated in records.

Because a main source of information in recreating the tragedy was the use of timebooks, the exact number of hours each firefighter worked is often available. The pay at the time was \$0.25/hr. Calculated for inflation this is approximately \$8.50 in 2025.

	Name	Fire Name	Location	Accident Type	Background and Notes
1	Shabaz Adams	Bullion Mine	Lookout Pass, ID	Entrapment	Adams had worked for the USFS since August 6 on fires in the Inland Northwest. His age was 28 or 29 years old. He was thought to be Persian in origin. The USFS calculated his next of kin was owed \$54.50 in wages.
2	K. Anderson	Trout Creek	Big Creek, ID	Entrapment *	
3	Venis Attene	Unknown	Unknown	Unknown	Attene may have been one of the entrapped Italian immigrant firefighters at Big Creek.
4	W. H. Baker	Setzer Creek	Storm Creek, ID	Entrapment	Originally from Minnesota. Timesheet documented 22 hours, \$5.50 in wages owed to next of kin.
5	Walter Beaman	Stevens Peak	Mullan, ID	Entrapment	26 years old.
6	Aaron Benson	Bullion Mine	Lookout Pass, ID	Entrapment	Known as "Dad" amongst the crew for his relative old age. From Wisconsin originally.

7	Oscar Berg	Setzer Creek	Storm Creek, ID	Entrapment	
8	August Berger	Big Creek	War Eagle Mine, ID	Entrapment	One of five firefighters who perished (August Berger, Joe Ferre, Harold Hanson, William Learnmouth, and Richard Woods) in Ranger Ed Pulaski's crew at the War Eagle Mine. Worked for the USFS since August 2, totaling 222 hours. Owed \$55.50.
9	O. Bing	Setzer Creek	Storm Creek, ID	Entrapment *	
10	George Blodgett	Setzer Creek	Storm Creek, ID	Entrapment	42 years old, originally from New York. Worked a total of 204 hours in August 1910, owed \$51.
11	Andrew Bourett	Tuscor	Swamp Creek, MT	Entrapment	20 years old.
12	Domenico Bruno	Big Creek	Big Creek, ID	Entrapment	Italian immigrant.
13	Anton Bucar	Big Creek	Big Creek, ID	Entrapment	Austro-Hungarian Immigrant.
14	Chauncey Leray Buck	Setzer Creek	Storm Creek, ID	Entrapment	
15	George W. Cameron	Big Creek	Big Creek, ID	Hit by tree	One of three (Cameron, Elliott and Upton Smith) hit by one large Western White Pine at the Beauchamp homestead in Big Creek. Canadian immigrant. Worked 337 hours, owed \$84.25.
16	D. Cary	Unknown	Unknown	Unknown	
17	William Casey	Unknown	Unknown	Unknown	
18	Chris Christensen	Trout Creek	Big Creek, ID	Entrapment	
19	James Denton	Trout Creek	Big Creek, ID	Entrapment	From Pennsylvania, killed along with his brother Joe.

20	Joe Denton	Trout Creek	Big Creek, ID	Entrapment	From Pennsylvania, killed along with his brother Jim.
21	M. Dillo	Unknown	Unknown	Unknown	
22	Jimmy Donahue	Setzer Creek	Storm Creek, ID	Entrapment	
23	Ed Dunn	Setzer Creek	Storm Creek, ID	Entrapment	
24	Ernest Elgin	Bullion Mine	Lookout Pass, ID	Entrapment	
25	O. Ellefson	Setzer Creek	Storm Creek, ID	Entrapment	Worked for the USFS 155 hours, \$38.75 owed to next of kin (two sisters).
26	W. J. Elliott	Big Creek	Big Creek, ID	Hit by tree	One of three (Cameron, Elliott and Upton Smith) hit by one large Western White Pine at the Beauchamp homestead in Big Creek. He survived the initial tree strike but died an unspecified time later. He worked 101 hours for the USFS, and was owed \$25.25.
27	Geroge Fease	Tuscor	Swamp Creek, MT	Entrapment	Aged 31, from Wisconsin originally.
28	Joe Ferre	Big Creek	War Eagle Mine, ID	Entrapment	One of five firefighters who perished (August Berger, Joe Ferre, Harold Hanson, William Learmouth, and Richard Woods) in Ranger Ed Pulaski's crew at the War Eagle Mine.
29	W. Flynn	Trout Creek	Big Creek, ID	Entrapment *	
30	Edward Frye	Trout Creek	Big Creek, ID	Entrapment *	
31	Peter "Pat" Grogan	Setzer Creek	Storm Creek, ID	Entrapment	An Irish immigrant living in Butte, Montana, who worked as a cook at fire camp. Aged 56. Worked

					206 hours for the USFS, owed \$51.50.
3 2	Harold Hanson	Big Creek	War Eagle Mine, ID	Entrapment	One of five firefighters who perished (August Berger, Joe Ferre, Harold Hanson, William Learmouth, and Richard Woods) in Ranger Ed Pulaski's crew at the War Eagle Mine. Aged 35, originally from Wisconsin. Worked 176 hours, owed \$44.
3 3	John J. Harpe	Trout Creek	Big Creek, ID	Entrapment *	
3 4	J. Harris	DeFaut	DeFaut Gulch, MT	Entrapment	Aged 25. Immigrant from Canada.
3 5	Jack Hill	Setzer Creek	Storm Creek, ID	Entrapment	Aged 26. Originally from Pennsylvania. Worked 22 hours, USFS owed him \$5.50.
3 6	Louis Holmes	Bullion Mine	Lookout Pass, ID	Entrapment	Cook at fire camp. Originally from England. Worked 148 hrs, USFS owed \$36.50.
3 7	John Hoss	Trout Creek	Big Creek, ID	Entrapment *	
3 8	Sam Hull	Trout Creek	Big Creek, ID	Entrapment *	
3 9	Harry Jackson	Setzer Creek	Storm Creek, ID	Entrapment *	Address in Washington State. Worked 22 hours, USFS owed \$5.50
4 0	Gust Johansen	Trout Creek	Big Creek, ID	Entrapment *	
4 1	L. Johnson	Trout Creek	Big Creek, ID	Entrapment *	
4 2	Pat Kelley	Unknown	Unknown	Unknown	
4 3	James Kerney	Unknown	Unknown	Unknown	

4 4	James Kerr	Setzer Creek	Storm Creek, ID	Entrapment	Age 45 from Iowa originally. Worked 158 hrs, USFS owed him \$39.50.
4 5	Ralph E. Koehn	Setzer Creek	Storm Creek, ID	Entrapment	
4 6	William Learmouth	Big Creek	War Eagle Mine, ID	Entrapment	One of five firefighters who perished (August Berger, Joe Ferre, Harold Hanson, William Learmouth, and Richard Woods) in Ranger Ed Pulaski's crew at the War Eagle Mine.
4 7	Larry Levar	Setzer Creek	Storm Creek, ID	Entrapment	Immigrant from Austria-Hungary. Worked 156 hours, \$39 owed by USFS.
4 8	Henry Lierman	Garwood	Garwood ID	Hit by tree	Aged 35. Died at the hospital in Spokane, WA.
4 9	George F. McGurk	Setzer Creek	Storm Creek, ID	Entrapment	Aged 28, originally from Massachusetts. Worked 156 hours, totaling \$39 in pay owed by USFS.
5 0	Frank Masterson	Setzer Creek	Storm Creek, ID	Entrapment	Worked 162 hours, USFS owed \$40.50.
5 1	Ed Miller	Unknown	Unknown	Unknown	
5 2	Ed Murphy	Setzer Creek	Storm Creek, ID	Entrapment	
5 3	Charles Van Nicolson	Bullion Mine	Lookout Pass, ID	Entrapment	Aged 16. Worked 90.50 hours, USFS paid \$22.50 to his father, who died one month later.
5 4	W. F. Norton	Setzer Creek	Storm Creek, ID	Entrapment	
5 5	Chris Omerzu	Big Creek	Big Creek, ID	Entrapment *	Possibly immigrant from Austria-Hungary. Work 254 hours, \$63.50.
5 6	M. P. H. Weiser	Setzer Creek	Storm Creek, ID	Entrapment	
5 7	J. B. Plant	DeFaut	DeFaut Gulch, MT	Entrapment	Aged 45.
5 8	W. Polk	Setzer Creek	Storm Creek, ID	Entrapment	Austro-Hungarian immigrant, likely named

					Polic. USFS paid family \$200.
59	James Riley	Unknown	Unknown	Unknown	
60	Joe Rusick	Setzer Creek	Storm Creek, ID	Entrapment	Austro-Hungarian immigrant, likely named Ruzic. Worked 168 hours, USFS owed him \$42.
61	Larry Ryson	Bullion Mine	Lookout Pass, ID	Entrapment	Aged 47. Worked 194.2 hours, owed \$48.55 by USFS.
62	Frank Sanders	Setzer Creek	Storm Creek, ID	Entrapment	
63	Louis Schwartz	Setzer Creek	Storm Creek, ID	Entrapment	German immigrant. Worked 22 hours, USFS owned him \$5.50.
64	Louis Shoman	Unknown	Unknown	Unknown	Seems likely misspelling or duplicate. Possibly German immigrant.
65	Harley Leroy Siphers	Setzer Creek	Storm Creek, ID	Entrapment	Aged 20, originally from Utah. Worked 22 hours, \$5.50 owed by USFS.
66	Frank Sketchell	Setzer Creek	Storm Creek, ID	Entrapment	Name possibly misspelled.
67	George Smith	Setzer Creek	Storm Creek, ID	Entrapment	Lived in Missoula, MT. Worked 85 hours, owed \$21.25 by USFS.
68	Harry Smith	Trout Creek	Big Creek, ID	Entrapment *	
69	Upton B. Smith	Big Creek	Big Creek, ID	Hit by tree	Homesteader in the area working for the USFS to suppress fires. Worked 270 hours, USFS owed \$67.50.
70	Jimmy Stevens	Trout Creek	Big Creek, ID	Entrapment *	
71	George Strong	Tuscor	Swamp Creek, MT	Entrapment	Aged 16, originally from Wisconsin.
72	Frank D. Swick	Setzer Creek	Storm Creek, ID	Entrapment	
73	Glen Taylor	Trout Creek	Big Creek, ID	Entrapment *	

74	M. Thuser	Unknown	Unknown	Unknown	Name possibly misspelled.
75	L. Ustlo	Setzer Creek	Storm Creek, ID	Entrapment	
76	Oscar Weigert	Setzer Creek	Near Avery, ID	Gunshot	Aged 23. High emotional state in anticipation of burnover. Died of two gunshots to the chest. Whether suicide or homicide disputed by government and family, it was adjudicated as suicide.
77	Thomas Welsh	Bullion Mine	Lookout Pass, ID	Entrapment	
78	Edward Williams	Tuscor	Swamp Creek, MT	Entrapment	
79	Richard Woods	Big Creek	War Eagle Mine, ID	Entrapment	One of five firefighters who perished (August Berger, Joe Ferre, Harold Hanson, William Learmouth, and Richard Woods) in Ranger Ed Pulaski's crew at the War Eagle Mine.
80	Leslie Zellers	Bullion Mine	Lookout Pass, ID	Entrapment	Aged 19. Worked 206 hours, owed \$51.50 by USFS.

Fatalities by Fire and Crew

DeFaut Fire (Near Cabinet, Idaho)

W. E. LaMonte's crew of 10 was entrapped on August 19th in an open meadow the crew was using for its camp as it worked to suppress the nearby DeFaut Fire. The crew laid in the meadow after wetting their bedding and clothes in spring water. During the entrapment two men got up and ran to escape the fire and perished.

J. Harris

J. B. Plant

Big Creek Fire (Southwest of Wallace, Idaho)

John W. Bell's crew on the Big Creek Fire became entrapped on the Middle Fork of Big Creek at the Beauchamp Homestead. Narratives document ten fatalities from this crew, three of whom were hit by one large Western White Pine tree.

Domenico Bruno
Anton Bucar
George W. Cameron
W. J. Elliott
Chris Omerzu
Upton B. Smith
(Four unknown)

Ed Pulaski was the Ranger in charge of a large number of firefighters. During the entrapment he took immediate command of a crew of about 40 that was working in conjunction with Bell's crew on the Middle Fork Big Creek drainage. They were located near the head of the Middle Fork and took refuge during the entrapment in the War Eagle Mine.

August Berger
Joe Ferre
Harold Hanson
William Learmouth
Richard Woods

Trout Creek Fire (Southwest of Wallace, Idaho)

Lee Hollingshead's crew was also working in the West Fork of Big Creek on a separate fire called the Trout Creek Fire. His crew of 60 became entrapped and 42 worked their way to safe black. Eighteen perished in the entrapment.

K. Anderson	Sam Hull
Chris Christensen	Gust Johansen
James Denton	L. Johnson
Joe Denton	Harry Smith
W. Flynn	Jimmy Stevens
Edward Frye	Glen Taylor
John J. Harpe	(Four unknown)
John Hoss	

Setzer Creek Fire (South of Wallace, Idaho)

William Rock's crew of about 70 men on the Setzer Fire took refuge in a burned over area during the big blowup. According to narratives and later investigation, one young man left the crew during the worst of the fire behavior and took his life by suicide.

Oscar Weigert

Ralph Debbit was away from his crew at his district headquarters when an entrapment of the crew became imminent. He sent a sheriff into the location of the crew to convince them to come out to the safety of Avery, Idaho. Of the crew of 70, 28 remained at the camp at Storm Creek and were entrapped there. All at Storm Creek perished. This was the largest single entrapment fatality event of the 1910 Fires.

W. H. Baker	Harry Jackson	Louis Schwartz
Oscar Berg	James Kerr	Harley L. Siphers
O. Bing	Ralph E. Koehn	Frank Sketchell
George Blodgett	Larry Levar	George Smith
Chauncey L. Buck	Frank Masterson	Frank D. Swick
Jimmy Donahue	Ed Murphy	L. Ustlo
Ed Dunn	W. F. Norton	M. P. H. Weiser
O. Ellefson	W. Polk	(One unknown)
Peter "Pat" Grogan	Joe Rusick	
Jack Hill	Frank Sanders	

Stevens Peak Fire (Near Mullan, Idaho)

James Danielson directed his crew of 18 to fire an open meadow of beargrass to serve as a safe area when the fire front reached them during the high winds of August 20. When the fire reached the edge of the meadow it reburned through unconsumed fuel. The crew laid down in the burned-off meadow and covered themselves with blankets. One man perished when he inhaled hot gases during the entrapment. The rest of the crew survived with burn injuries.

Walter Beaman

Bullion Mine Fire (Near Lookout Pass, Idaho/Montana Border)

S. M. Taylor's crew of about 60 became entrapped on the Bullion Mine Fire, and Taylor took the crew into the mine tunnel to protect them. The majority of the crew went far enough into the mine to pass an air shaft, which in the burnover acted as a chimney to vent the smoke out. Eight men did not go far enough into the mine to pass this shaft and were suffocated in dense smoke.

Shabaz Adams

Aaron Benson
Ernest Elgin
Louis Holmes
Charles Van Nicolson
Larry Ryson
Thomas Welsh
Leslie Zellers

Tuscor Fire (Near Noxon, Montana)

Roy Engle and his crew of about 25 were working in the Swamp Creek area of the Tuscor Fire when they received word late on August 20th that they needed to come to safety in the valley below. Early on the 21st they made their way down the trail towards the Clark Fork River when they ran into a fire at the mouth of Swamp Creek. The crew sought safety farther up Swamp Creek in a rockslide, four died after attempting to escape farther uphill.

Andrew Bourett
George Fease
George Strong
Edward Williams

Garwood Fire (North of Coeur d'Alene, Idaho)

A fire in the valley north of Coeur d'Alene was attacked by firefighters of unknown employ, possibly local citizen volunteers with no fire organization in charge. One man was hit by a large tree branch and severely injured, he died in the hospital in Spokane, Washington.

Henry Lierman

Unknown Fires

Ten additional firefighter names are not associated with a specific fire. Because these names are not verified by timesheets or other specific fire documentation, names may also be incorrect. These names likely are some, or all, of the "unknowns" listed on the fires above.

Venis Attene
D. Cary
William Casey
M. Dillo
Pat Kelley
James Kerney
Ed Miller
James Riley
Louis Shoman
M. Thuser