

Incident Summary Page for the Hotshot Crew Line of Duty Death

Name of Hotshots LODD: Anthony A. Czak Stephen H. Furey Scott L. Nelson	Incident Name: Battlement Creek Fire
	Incident Date & Time: 07/17/1976
Hotshot Crew: Mormon Lake	Incident Location: Grand Junction District, Bureau of Land Management, Colorado
Personal Information	
Anthony Czak, age 25, was the Crew Foreman and a four year veteran of the crew. He was a native of New York and had recently graduated from Northern Arizona University with a Forestry degree. He was survived by his wife.	
Stephen Furey, age 22, served four years with the crew and was a Squad Boss. Born and raised Idaho, he was survived by his parents and family.	
Scott Nelson, age 23, a first year crewman from Wisconsin, was survived by his parents and family.	
Brief description	
The Battlement Creek fire started on July 11 from a lightning storm that went through the area. The Mormon Lake and Happy Jack Hotshot Crews from Arizona arrived Friday July 16 and worked the day shift. On that day, Airtanker T-56 crashed while dropping retardant, killing pilot Don Goodman. The day shift plan for July 17 called for the Mormon Lake and Happy Jack Hotshot Crews to improve and secure control lines established the previous shift. During burnout operations along a ridge line, the Mormon Lake burnout squad became cut off from their safety zone when the fire made an uphill run. Crew Foreman Tony Czak and crew members Stephen Furey, John Gibson, and Scott Nelson took refuge on the handline, covering themselves with their canvas Filson vests as the fire passed over. Czak, Furey and Nelson perished, Gibson survived with serious burn injuries.	
Links to more information on this incident:	
This fire has been identified as one of the 100 fires every firefighter should know about. Please go to the 100 Fires Project website and find the Battlement Creek Fire on the timeline for more extensive information and references: https://wffoundation.org/100fires	



Tony Czak



Scott Nelson



Steve Furey