

Incident Summary Page for the Hotshot Crew Line of Duty Death

Name of Hotshots LODD: Nelson Harlan Steven Johnson Boyd Edwards	Incident Name: Decker Fire
	Incident Date & Time: 08/08/1959
Hotshot Crew: El Cariso	Incident Location: Cleveland National Forest, California
Personal Information	
Boyd M. Edwards, age 18, of Anaheim California, died at Riverside Community Hospital, Riverside, California on August 16, of bronchopneumonia due to extensive burns. He was survived by his parents.	
Nelson D. Harlan, age 23, from Crown Point, New Mexico, died at Santa Margarita Naval Hospital, Oceanside, California, on the morning of August 16. Cause of death was pulmonary thrombosis due to extensive second and third degree burns. He was survived by his mother, a sister and two brothers.	
Steven W. Johnson, age 18, died at Riverside Community Hospital on August 15, 1959, of bronchopneumonia due to extensive burns. He was a recent graduate of Huntington Beach Union High School, and was survived by his brother.	
Brief description of the event if known:	
Six firefighters, including three members of the El Cariso Hotshot Crew whose station was only a couple miles from the fire, died as a result of the Decker Fire west of Lake Elsinore, California. A primary factor that resulted in the firefighters being trapped and overrun on the Ortega Highway, was the fire behavior associated with a local diurnal wind shift that is unique to the Elsinore Front of the Santa Ana Mountains.	
Forest Service District Ranger Ben Slater, San Juan Station Foreman Andrew Brooks, and California Division of Forestry Tanker Foreman John Guthrie, also died of burn injuries suffered in this incident.	
Links to more information on this incident if available:	
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 Decker Fire on the timeline for more extensive information and references: https://wffoundation.org/100fires	

