

SEPTEMBER 2017



# CFPA NEWS

THE CALIFORNIA FIRE PILOTS ASSOCIATION NEWSLETTER



AERIAL SUPERVISION  
MODULES



FAREWELL NEPTUNE





# CFPA NEWS

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Photos: size 2400 px on the longest side with your name in the filename for credit.

**And please, feel free to print the Newsletter and share it around!**

COVER : J. Laval, Tor Carter-Imsland



Looking at my log book, I've been flying every day. Initial Attacking fires. Stopping the spread, buying time for Fire Fighters on the ground to get some hose lays and Dozers to cut some trail. All Cal Fire aircraft are driven by the same objective and it's great to see a Team at work. Combining all means, air and ground, with the same goal and taking care of 97% of the fires. Impressive to realize the many things coming in motion: Command Centers, Dispatch, engines, transport and dozers, air attack, copters and tankers. From morning line up to sunset, we're ready.

When things get complicated and fires are called "Complex", Leadplanes/ASM are taking over the drop area. They have a difficult role to expedite Retardant drops and build line on a fast pace. Tankers just follow them when their numbers are called. Not much talk on the radio, just flying close behind and drop where they want. Leadplane: "Tanker... nice tie in, load and return. For the next Tanker, we're going to tag and extend."

Rick Haagenson's article explains it with more details but I sure appreciate flying behind a Leadplane on these fires and I don't see how we could be more safe and efficient.

Jerome Laval - Tanker 85





Cal Fire  
Attack / Heliattack Base  
2235 Airport Blvd.  
Santa Rosa, Ca. 95401

HUG! HUG!  
HUG! HUG! HUG!  
HUG! HUG!



Dear Winged Angels,

All of you are my Hero !

Usually when I see you fly I think oh, no that's bad. However last Sunday (9/17) when I saw you I was so happy. As first response to the fire I called in with just smell and smoke. Your pilots are amazing and extraordinary ! The drops I witnessed you make were so close from my view. If you didn't make the drops I don't think my house would still be here. It was headed straight for us. You don't know how thankful I am. You all deserve gold stars and brownie points to the moon for your effort and skill !

So, from the bottom of my heart a most appreciative shout out to you Winged Angels for all you do. Some unbelievably spectacular flying !

Happy and Grateful,

7010 Mill Creek Rd. Residence

# ASSOCIATED AERIAL FIREFIGHTERS ANNUAL MEETING

## DECEMBER 13, 2017, RENO, NV

We are assembling our speakers for this year and our keynote speaker is Colonel Rick "CJ" Sturckow, USMC (Ret.). "CJ" is a Marine Aviator and a retired Astronaut and has built a very comprehensive CRM program. This program is being adjusted to fit aerial firefighting operations. This will be an excellent presentation. Our next presentation will be from an application / operations specialist for the Garmin Corporation to talk about the advances in ADS-B equipment and options for firefighting aircraft.

US Forest Service Washington Office Air Program Manager will discuss large airtanker and helicopter operational issues.

CAL FIRE will provide an update on their program and aircraft inventory.

Retardant updates and environmental impacts on retardant use from Ron Railey, ICL Phos Chek.

We are lining up some airframe and engine exhibitors that will have displays. We have an SR-71 pilot that will be in



attendance for both Tuesday and Wednesday evening social get together for some fun by the last operational pilot of the Blackbird; Lt. Col. Tom McCleary will provide some very interesting aspects of the SR-71 operation.

We will have updates from several State Forestry Units, and several city and county operators and some additional interesting speakers.

More details to follow. Please make your room reservations now. Col. CJ Sturckow,

and other speakers will arrive Tuesday and we should have them at our hospitality suite by 6:00 PM; here is your opportunity for one-on-one discussion! We will have a second hospitality "meeting" Wednesday night too for more personal discussions.

Check-in at the El Dorado, Tuesday, December 12. The meeting takes place on Wednesday, December 13. For the AAF group rate, it's necessary that you make your reservation by November 20. Call the El Dorado Hotel 1-800-687-8733, give reservations the Reference Group name: ASSOCIATED AERIAL FIREFIGHTERS. The Special Group Code is IEAAA17. Standard room rate is \$40.00 per night and deluxe room rate is \$55.00 per night. Check-in is 3:00pm and checkout is noon.

We have hospitality rooms for Tuesday and Wednesday evenings; this is where the business is finished! If you have questions, please call Dave Wardall 209-274-9160 or E-mail: davidwardall@gmail.com



# CONGRATULATIONS!

## INITIAL ATTACK TANKER PILOT HENRY FIERRO



For me, it started in 1995 with my third job in aviation as a mechanic for T.B.M. Inc. I flew the C-206, acquired my multi engine rating then moved on to the Aztec. In 1999 an opportunity to fly on T-60 became available. After that season, it was apparent that I would not have a permanent seat for the next fire season as flight crews would change the following year. Long story short, I spent the next 14 years flying for Sky West Airlines. Three seasons in the OV-10 and here I am. Thanks to those who paved the way, and Instructors who dare to teach.

**Henry Fierro**



# FOR SALE

5 \$ each

Please contact Jerome Laval : [jerome.laval@hotmail.com](mailto:jerome.laval@hotmail.com)







## WILDFIRE NEWS OF THE DAY

### California Wildfire News Compilation

by Michael Archer

As climate change continues to get the blame for worsening wildfires (instead of timber stands that need thinning), a new study published in the journal Nature Geoscience provides more confirmation the climate models are running too hot and could not predict the 15-year "hiatus" in global warming.

**Another Major Study Confirms The IPCC's Climate Models Were Wrong** [LINK](#)

In a year which has seen wildfire suppression costs pass the \$2 billion mark, U.S. Secretary of Agriculture Sonny Perdue is enlisting state foresters' help to lobby Congress to pass legislation that would pay for wildfires like other natural disasters, not steal money from fire prevention to pay suppression costs.

**As Wildfires Get Worse, USDA Says Firefighters Need More Funding** [LINK](#)

After a weekend in which temperatures in San Francisco reached a record 106°, a professor of meteorology at San Jose State University warned that massive wildfires and stifling heat waves are the new normal for the Bay Area because more carbon dioxide is being pumped into the atmosphere.

**Wildfires and Heat Waves Could Be the New Normal in Bay Area: Experts** [LINK](#)

Orange County Fire Authority is hoping to have the 2'660-acre Canyon Fire, which is burning near Corona along the Orange County-Riverside County line, fully contained by the weekend.

**Canyon Fire Update: Full Containment Possible This** [LINK](#)



Firefighters from CAL FIRE, Madera County Fire and the Sierra National Forest, supported by an Air Attack plane, two helicopters and air-tankers, made quick work of a wildfire which burned 0.25-0.5 acre in the Ahwahnee area yesterday.

**Fire On Road 600 Between Ahwahnee And Raymond** [LINK](#)

While the fall has been relatively calm in Southern California so far, Santa Ana winds are expected to blow through passes in the San Emigdio, San Gabriel, San Bernardino and Santa Ana mountains, elevating the wildfire danger.

**Gusty winds to increase wildfire danger across Southern California through Monday** [LINK](#)

CAL FIRE unveiled their Ready for Wildfire app, which puts a library of step-by-step checklists in the hands of homeowners to track their progress when creating defensible space, hardening their homes with fire-resistant construction, assembling an emergency supply kit, and creating a family communication and evacuation plan.

**CAL FIRE launches new Ready for Wildfire app** [LINK](#)

Useful and interesting links :

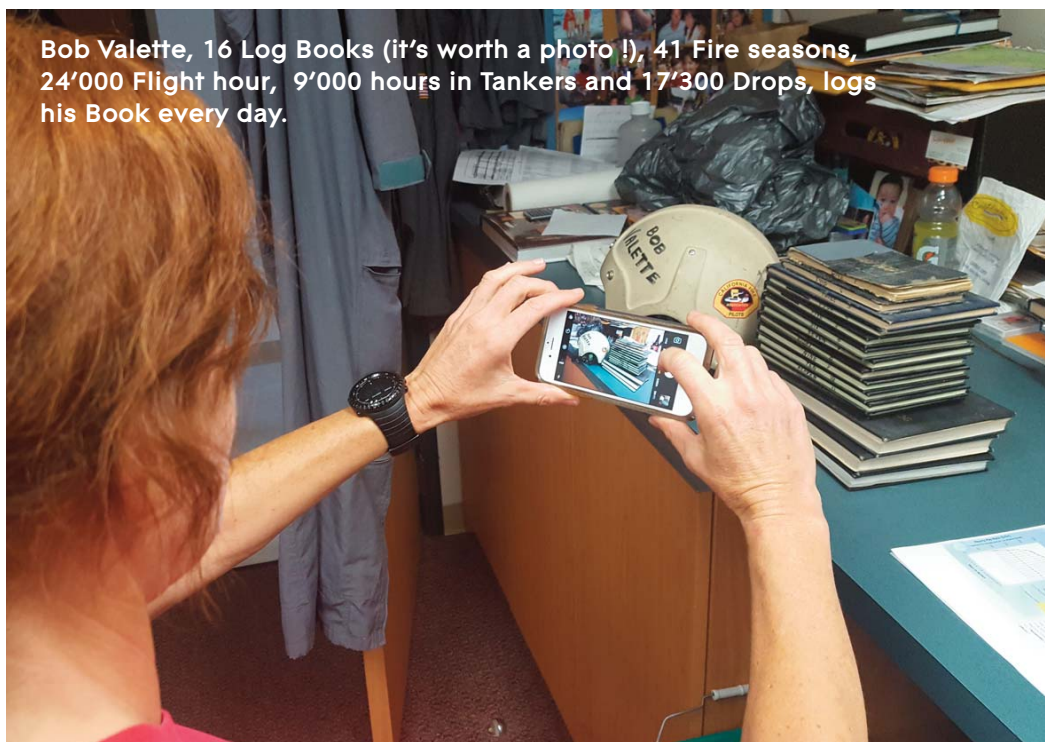
<http://www.cafiresci.org/> [LINK](#)

<http://www.recordnet.com/news/20170316/fitzgerald-fire-bomber-describes-his-job> [LINK](#)

# BOB VALETTE



Bob Valette, 16 Log Books (it's worth a photo !), 41 Fire seasons, 24'000 Flight hour, 9'000 hours in Tankers and 17'300 Drops, logs his Book every day.



And a happy grand father !



## FAREWELL NEPTUNE !

Photo : Tor Carter-Imsland

On 30th September, in Missoula, Montana, Neptune Aviation celebrates the end of fire fighting operations of P2V Neptune tankers after a 48 year long career.

Since the early 70s, more than 30 P2V-5 and P2V-7 have been involved in these fire missions with many companies such as Black Hills, Evergreen, Hawkins & Powers, Johnson Flying Services, Minden Air and AeroUnion.

This one, Tanker 07, was seen in Chico AAB this season.



## AERIAL SUPERVISION MODULES (ASM)

Cal Fire OV-10 used as an ASM aircraft. (Via Rick Haagenson)



The primary objective of the ASM/leadplane program is to provide for the SAFE, effective utilization of fixed-wing air-tankers.

In the absence of an ASM/leadplane, this same objective becomes the responsibility of the Air Tactical Group Supervisor (ATGS). On Initial Attack (IA) or non-complex incidents this is routinely accomplished by a well trained ATGS. However, on rapidly emerging or complex incidents, it can be a very difficult to meet this objective because of the multitude of additional responsibilities placed on the ATGS. These additional duties

include providing direct assistance to the ground forces in the form of real-time intelligence and making tactical recommendations. In these instances, ATGS's are also tasked with recommending and ordering additional aircraft while providing continuous fire updates to on-scene incident management and Emergency Command Centers (ECC's). Assisting incoming ground units with fire access is also a time consuming duty which naturally falls to the ATGS.

The real strength of the ASM program comes down to a basic principle taught to me by a former Smokejumper Foreman,:

"Many hands make light work". It is a concept most often referred to as "span of control". The simple fact is, no matter how skilled, well trained or experienced an ATGS is, another resource sharing the workload is bound to make for a safer, more efficient operation. This is true whether it is a helicopter coordinator (HELCO) or an ASM.

One of the greatest advantages and strengths of the ASM platform is the two person crew, consisting of a highly experienced ATGS and an interagency carded leadplane pilot working together in a single aircraft. This allows the leadplane pilot to devote 100% of his effort and concentration to providing a safe work environment for the fixed-wing airtankers. At the same time the back seater/right seater is fully engaged coordinating with the ground units, sequencing helicopters between retardant drops and coordinating tactics with the ATGS and Chief Division Supervisors Operations. The ASM pilot has the training and expertise to help in establishing safe ingress and egress for tankers using altitude floors and ceilings, as well as by establishing Initial Points (IP's) for tanker routing or holding. In addition, the ASM will routinely fly the actual run several times before taking a fully loaded air-





**Busy in a King Air  
over a fire. (USAF)**

tanker down through the run. This is to ensure the drop is clear of personnel as well as to check for visibility, up air, down air, turbulence and hazards. The ASM

will also fly the entire exit to verify the escape is suitable for the airtanker, even in the event the aircraft experiences an emergency during the run.

The ability of the ASM to devote all of their attention to the delivery of retardant by fixed-wing airtankers does far more than ensure a safe work environment. Cost is a factor which must be considered with the increased use of larger and more expensive aircraft. Those costs can be significant in instances when an ATGS is forced to hold airtankers or heavy helicopters while performing other necessary duties. The costs of heavy airtankers and helicopters routinely runs in the thousands or tens of thousands of dollars per hour of flight time. An experienced ASM can usually get the airtankers in, dropped and out with a very minimal amount of time spent orbiting the fire. This saves money while also increas-

**King Air using smoke over the target to help Tanker's timing. (Steve Whitby)**





Beech King Air (90 and 200) are the common aircraft used by USFS in Lead Planes and ASM missions. This one in the picture is one of two King Air (A503 and A504) owned and operated by Cal Fire for ATGS School (Training Air Tactical Group Supervisor). (J. Laval)

ing safety by reducing aircraft congestion in the Fire Traffic Area (FTA). It also puts more retardant on the ground in a given amount of time.

In addition to the obvious advantages of employing the ASM, there are a few instances where the ASM or leadplane is required by agency policy. These include the utilization of the military's Modular Airborne Firefighting System (MAFFs), non IA rated airtanker pilots and the Very Large Airtankers (VLATs) such as the

DC-10 or 747. They are also required when requested by an airtanker pilot, which usually occurs as a result of poor visibility or congested airspace.

On two separate occasions this season I have had VLATs, MAFFs, scoopers, and SEATs in addition to Type I, II and III conventional airtankers on a single incident. Obviously this scenario requires an ASM or leadplane by policy. Unfortunately, some folks are considering ordering an ASM/Leadplane only when re-

quired by policy. I would suggest we consider ordering an ASM/leadplane on any fire which we believe may not be contained in the first operational period. A good "trigger point" might be upon the ordering of the fifth or sixth airtanker. This would allow the ATGS to concentrate on other tasks without compromising the safety or efficiency of fixed-wing retardant delivery.

In the current ASM program, it is not uncommon for an ASM crew to have over forty seasons





Aero commanders are used as Air Attack platforms by USFS but no longer as Lead Planes. (J. Laval)

of wildland firefighting experience. While providing for the safety of the airtanker crews is our primary objective, we are also committed to making sure the retardant is delivered in a manner which will provide the greatest benefit to the firefighters on the ground. This is achieved through constant dia-

logue with the supervising ATGS as well as direct communication with the Branch Chiefs and Division Supervisors on the ground.

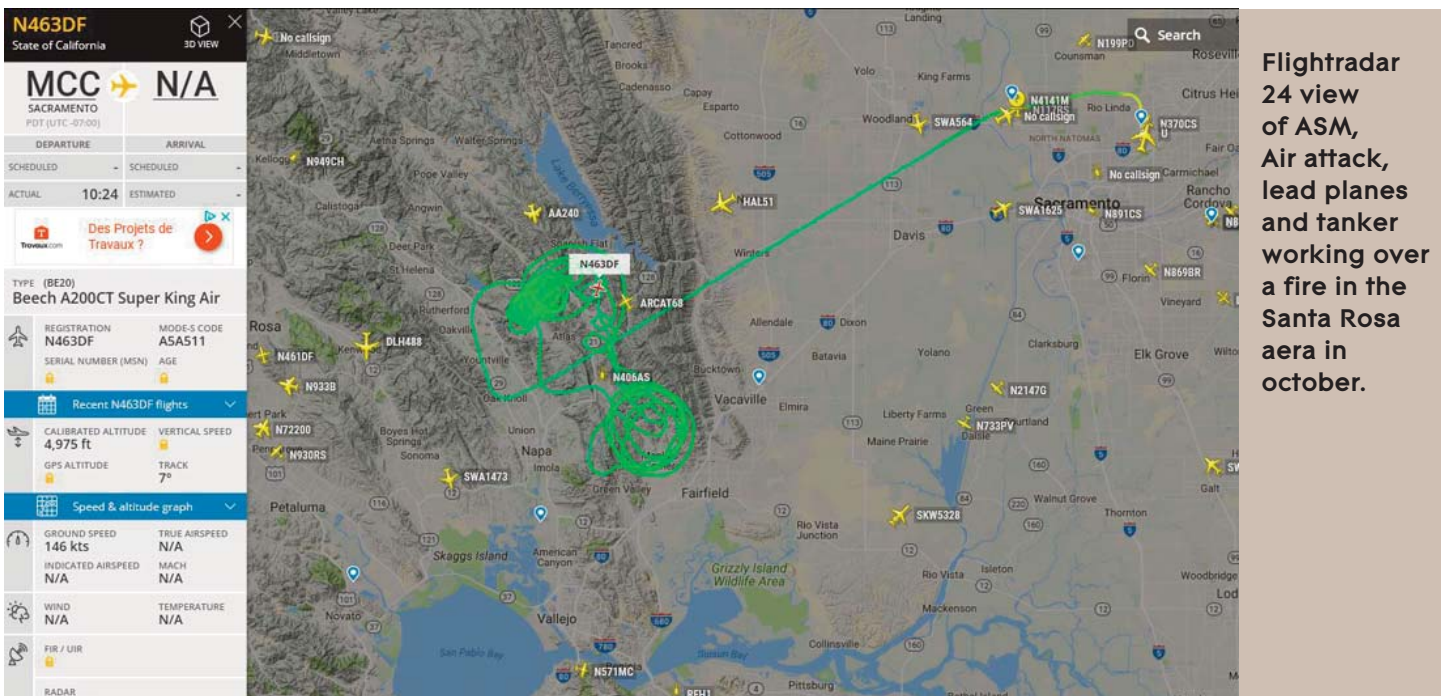
The current ASM group consists of 15 USDA Forest Service (USFS), 5 Bureau of Land Management (BLM), 2 Cal Fire and 1 state of Alaska pilots. The fleet

is comprised of King Air 90's and 200's flown by the USFS and BLM OV-10's for Cal Fire, and a 690 Commander operated by the state of Alaska.

It is not that an ATGS working alone cannot provide a safe work environment for the fixed-wing tankers. It is simply that they cannot devote their undivided attention to this single, critical undertaking. We will likely never eliminate all the risks inherent in the wildland fire-fighting environment. What we can do is employ all of the tools at our disposal to manage and mitigate these risks. ASM's are one of the most effective resources in achieving this goal.

Rick O. Haagenson  
"Charlie 3"(\*)

(\*) Each pilot is given his personal Call Sign which becomes the Call Sign of the platform. Cal Fire has 2 ASMs : Bob Coward is « Charlie 1 », Rick Haagenson is « Charlie 3 »



## TANKERS SEEN AT M<sup>c</sup>CLELLAN



Photos : Jim Dunn

Cal Fire Tanker 91 dropping water to check the tank system after some maintenance.



Busy fire season for Coulson's Tanker 133. This Lockheed L-100 Hercules was contracted by Cal Fire.

Tanker 62: a magnificent Douglas DC-7 from Erickson Aero Tanker.





# PHOTO REPORTS



VLATs such as Tanker 911 are getting called more often.

USFS C-130 Tanker 116 with its MAFFS II Tank system.



First fire season for Tanker 167, a Conair RJ-85AT operated by Aero Flite and contracted by the USFS.



# PHOTO REPORTS



McClellan is also the Northern California Base for the Boeing 747 Supertanker.



With their new tanks, Erickson Aero Tanker MD-87s are back!

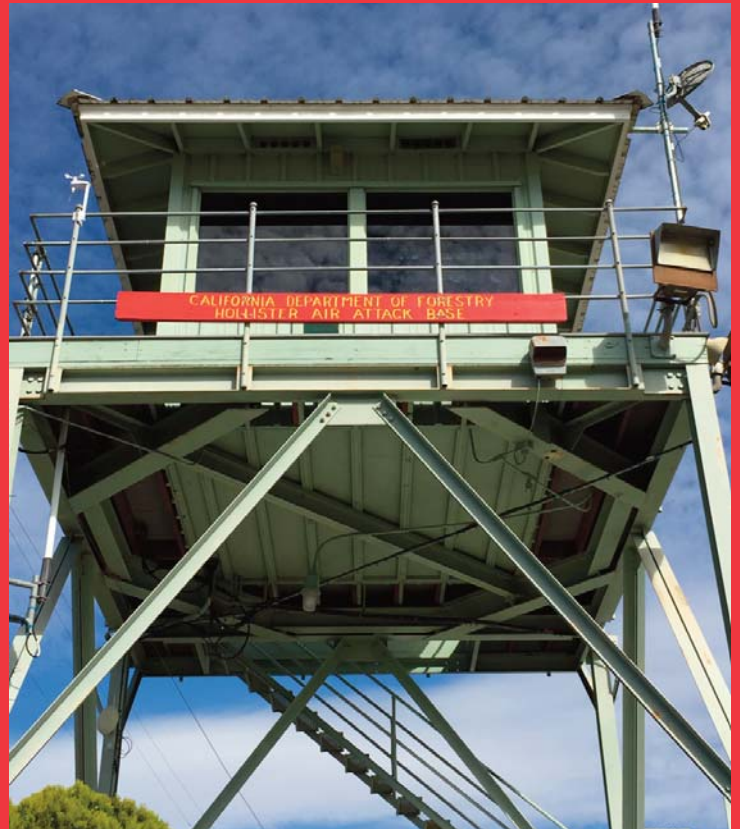


Aero Flite operates 4 Bombardier CL-415 Super Scoopers based at Lake Tahoe.



## HOLLISTER AIR TANKER BASE

Welcome to Hollister AAB.





# PHOTO REPORTS



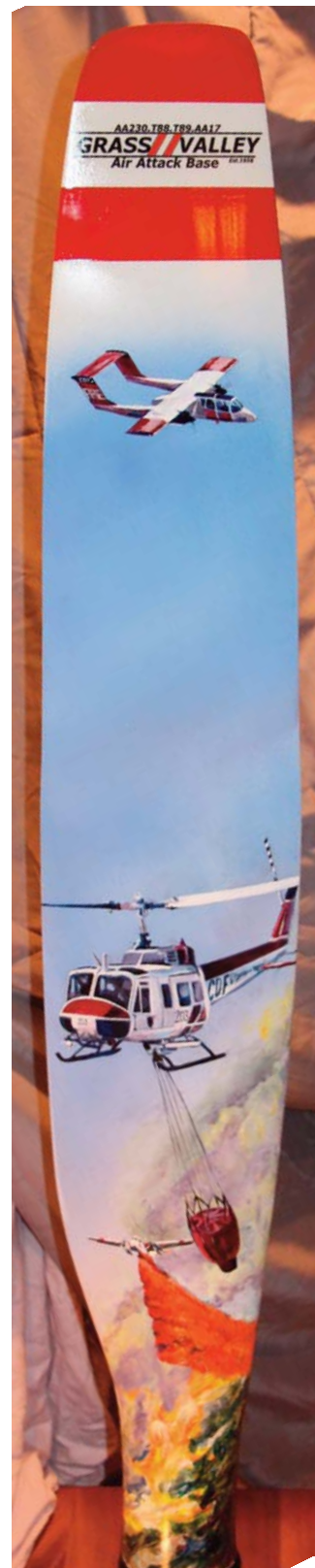
Craig Hunt still has his parking spot on his base.



## THOMAS STEVEN BURGARD

A California native, Thomas Burgard began his professional art career selling custom painted surfboards as a teenager. After receiving a Bachelor Degree in Fine Arts from California State University at Long Beach, Thomas over the past 30 years has expanded his offerings to commissioned portraits, landscapes, murals, logos, and numerous media, from acrylic and oils to bronze and wood.

As a North Coast resident and member of the Timber Cove Fire District volunteer fire fighting team, Thomas most recently worked the fire line on the Sonoma County fires and has been inspired by the commitment, service and athleticism of in field career firefighters. Moreover, having served in aviation ground support for the fire teams, Thomas has a long and active interest in aerial fire combat and has captured the dark majesty of planes in action in his paintings, rendering the images on propeller blades and other unique surfaces. Please contact Thomas to see more of his works or inquire about commissioned works of any size (and on almost any surfaces.)



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# LOAD AND RETURN GRASS VALLEY

BY J. LAVAL





# PHOTO REPORTS

