

Incident Summary Page for the Smokejumper Line of Duty Death

Name of Smokejumper LODD: Tommy Roy Smith (CJ-61)	Incident Name: Siskiyou Base Project
	Incident Date & Time: May 5, 1967
Smokejumper Base: Cave Junction	Incident Location: Siskiyou National Forest, Oregon
Personal Information	
<p>Tommy in his 6th Smokejumping season, served in the US Army 1964-65. Born July 23 1940, his family had moved from Texas to Grants Pass Oregon where Tommy graduated high school, prior to attending Southern Oregon College.</p> <p>He was survived by his parents Floy and George.</p>	
Brief description	
<p>Tommy died having drowned in the Illinois River while packing out from a remote helispot construction project.</p> <p>Tommy, Rey Zander (NCSB-56) and Ron McMinimy (RDD-65) parachuted into the remote backcountry the previous day, part of a Siskiyou National Forest project to build helicopter landing areas. Having roughed out a helispot near Nome Peak, the three Smokejumpers gathered their gear for the pack out. The chosen route was to cross the Illinois River to the River Trail and then hike a few miles to a dirt road. Tommy, the first to cross the river, tied a rope around his waist and worked his way toward the other side. Rey and Ron held the other end of the rope, which was to be used to ferry their gear across in a rubber raft. The river, where Tommy chose to cross and then land, was calm but gained strength just a little further downstream.</p> <p>As Tommy neared the opposite bank the rope caught in the current and pulled him back into the river and faster moving water. Rey and Ron pulled in the slack from the rope, hopeful it would keep him from drifting further downstream. Tommy then swung to the other side of the river and Rey and Ron watched as he went under twice. Following Tommy downstream until they ran into a rock wall, they let go of the rope believing it was the only chance Tommy had of escaping the river. Tommy was swept rapidly down river, where the rope became entangled on rocks pulling him underwater and holding him there. A helicopter was called in to assist, but Rey and Ron were unable to retrieve Tommy's body. He was found May 13th, having been washed about 700 yards further downstream.</p>	
Links to more information on this incident:	

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Siskiyou Smokejumper Base
Crew Picture 1961



Siskiyou Smokejumper Base 1961

BACK ROW: John Childers (pilot), Jim Allen (PAO), Ralph Williams (pilot), Jim Olesen, Jan vanWagtendonk, Mike Simon, Jim Fritz, Larry Welch, Gary Welch, Bernie Welch, Tommy Smith, Owen Riffe, Phil Beardslee, Mike McCracken, Ron Lufkin, Arlene Hoover (clerk), Mrs. Kaufman (cook), Mrs. Wolff (cook), Darlene Langhurst (clerk), Ruth Boucher (rigger).

FRONT ROW: Al Boucher (foreman), Larry Wright, Fred Cramer, Ken Rosenberg, Dennis Wheeler, Bill Knight, Chuck Sheley, Chuck Mansfield, Ted Sandelin, Jack Ridgway, Al Baker, Paul Boyer, Dick Board.

MISSING: Norm Pawlowski, Gordon Kellogg, Ron Thoreson, Glenda Marchant (rigger).