

Incident Summary Page for the Smokejumper Line of Duty Death

Name of Smokejumper LODD: Tim D Hart (GAC-16)	Incident Name: Eicks Fire
	Incident Date & Time: May 24, 2021
Smokejumper Base: West Yellowstone	Incident Location: Hidalgo County New Mexico
Personal Information	
<p>Tim 36, was a 6th season smokejumper and West Yellowstone spotter and squadleader. He began his fire career in 2006 and had served on Forest Service and BLM engines and hotshot crews previous to becoming a smokejumper at Grangeville Idaho in 2016. He graduated high school in the Chicago area and earned a Forestry degree from Southern Illinois University.</p> <p>He is survived by his wife Michelle and dog Dash in Wyoming, his mother and sister.</p> <p>Following Tim's death his wife Michelle became an outspoken advocate for reform in the pay and classification of Federal wildland fire fighters. She also recognized the need for a greater awareness of physical and mental health issues, as well as highlighting the stresses the occupation places on the individual and their family. In large part due to her efforts, the Tim Hart Wildland Firefighter Classification and Pay Parity Act was introduced in Congress in 2023.</p>	
Brief description	
<p>Tim died June 2nd, as a result of injuries suffered jumping the Eicks Fire on the afternoon of May 24th. A load of Silver City smokejumpers responded to a fire on private land, in the far southwest "bootheel" corner of New Mexico, the fire had spread slowly in rocky, ravine type terrain with sparse vegetation. The spotter located a jump spot that was <i>"open and grassy with a few scattered yuccas"</i>. Noted in the spotter briefing was 400 yard drift and that <i>"the opposing slope and drainages were rocky, especially as you moved down drainage."</i></p> <p>The Jumper in Command (JIC) on the first stick, reported to the jump ship <i>"there was a lot of wind up high"</i>, and it was <i>"floaty down low...sporty final, tough to get out of the air...but had good luck working the slope down drainage."</i> Tim was the sixth jumper out, third in a stick of three. For reasons unknown Tim ended up south of the jump spot and <i>"landed on the side of the drainage, uphill into rocks the size of garbage pails."</i> The JIC and Jumper #2 observed Tim's flight and impact and immediately raced to his location. Upon reaching Tim the JIC requested trauma gear and shortly updated the situation to <i>"Red critical...unconscious...weak pulse...need air ambulance with a flight nurse."</i> Four of the seven smokejumpers on the ground were EMT's and quickly began stabilizing and preparing Tim for a medivac. An hour and fifteen minutes later Tim was flown off the fire to a Trauma Center in El Paso Texas, where he succumbed to his injuries nine days later.</p> <p>The exact cause of Tim's difficulties on that jump remain unknown. However, the Eicks Fire Fatality Report stated that the first two jumpers in Tim's stick, and the final two smokejumpers, as well as the spotters and jump ship pilot all noted a significant change in air stability, winds and increased turbulence. The medivac helicopter pilot was challenged due to strong and shifting winds.</p>	
Links to more information on this incident:	
<p> https://lessons.wildfire.gov/incident/eicks-fire-smokejumping-accident-fatality-2021 https://wlfalwaysremember.net/2022/01/05/2021-06-02-nm-tim-hart/ https://www.chicagotribune.com/2021/06/21/he-died-doing-what-he-loved-smokejumper-from-chicago-area-mourned-after-suffering-fatal-injuries-fighting-forest-fire-in-new-mexico/ https://smokejumpers.com/magazine/tim-harts-death-should-matter/ https://www.grassrootswildlandfirefighters.com/tims-act </p>	

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