

Incident Summary Page for the Hotshot Crew Line of Duty Death

Name of Hotshots LODD: Deon Classay	Incident Name: Diamond Fire
	Incident Date & Time: 07/23/2011
Hotshot Crew: Fort Apache	Incident Location: Fort Apache Indian Reservation, Arizona
Personal Information	
Deon "Dino" Classay, age 42, had served on the crew for 22 years and was survived by his wife and 2 children.	
Brief description	
On July 23, Deon "Dino" Classay, Squad Leader on the Fort Apache Hotshot crew died while hiking out of the 35 acre Diamond Fire, a local initial attack fire on their home unit near Whiteriver, Arizona. The crew was headed to a spike camp for the night when he became separated from the crew and unbeknownst to the others collapsed. Upon reaching the camp it was noticed he was missing. A search was initiated, including local EMS and law enforcement agencies, and his body was found the following morning. The cause of death was a heart attack, with environmental heat exposure noted as a contributing factor.	
Links to more information on this incident:	
https://www.fs.usda.gov/rm/pubs_other/rmrs_2012_waconda_j001.pdf https://www.wmicentral.com/news/latest_news/updated-fort-apache-hotshot-deon-dino-classay-dies-in-the-line-of-duty/article_a5e53486-b89c-11e0-8758-001cc4c03286.html https://wlfalwaysremember.net/2011/07/23/dino-classay/	



Deon "Dino" Classay

Arizona Daily Sun — azdailysun.com

Nation

Authorities probing firefighter death

By FELICIA FONSECA

Associated Press

Authorities are investigating the death of a veteran firefighter who was reported missing from a blaze on the Fort Apache reservation in eastern Arizona.

Search crews found the body of Deon Classay, of Whiteriver, early Sunday morning after a nighttime search and efforts to reach him through a handheld radio he was carrying a day earlier failed.

The 43-year-old Classay was part of the Fort Apache Hotshots who did initial attacks on the lightning-caused Diamond Fire that broke out north of the Black River around noon Saturday. A spokeswoman for the U.S. Bureau of Indian Affairs' Fort Apache Agency released his identity Monday and described him as an outdoors person, who enjoyed hunting and fishing.

The hotshot crew hiked back to camp after building a line around the 35-acre fire that was burning in steep, rocky terrain with dense fuel. The incident commander realized then that Classay was missing and initiated a search, according to a preliminary report.

Authorities have called for stress counselors and an accident investigation team to determine what happened, said Fort Apache Agency spokeswoman Candy Lupe. She had no further information on the circumstances surrounding Classay's death.

Classay joined the Fort Apache Hotshots in 1990 and has worked on the state's two largest wildfires — the Wallow Fire that broke out May 29 and burned 538,049 acres, mostly in the Apache-Sitgreaves National Forest, and the Rodeo-Chedeski Fire that charred 468,000 acres in June 2002.

The BIA offered its condolences to Classay's family. He leaves behind a wife, two children, two grandchildren, his mother, three sisters and two brothers, Lupe said.

"This is such a tight-knit community that we all know each other, and a lot of us are related to each other," Lupe said. "Everyone in the community is taking it hard."

The National Interagency Fire Center in Boise, Idaho, has tracked more than 1,000 deaths associated with fighting wildfires from 1910-2010. They include deaths associated with equipment, burns and medical conditions.

The last one in Arizona before Classay's death was in October 2008 when a state Department of Corrections worker who was supervising inmates battling a fire on the Havasu National Wildlife Refuge had a heart attack, according to the National Wildfire Coordinating Group.