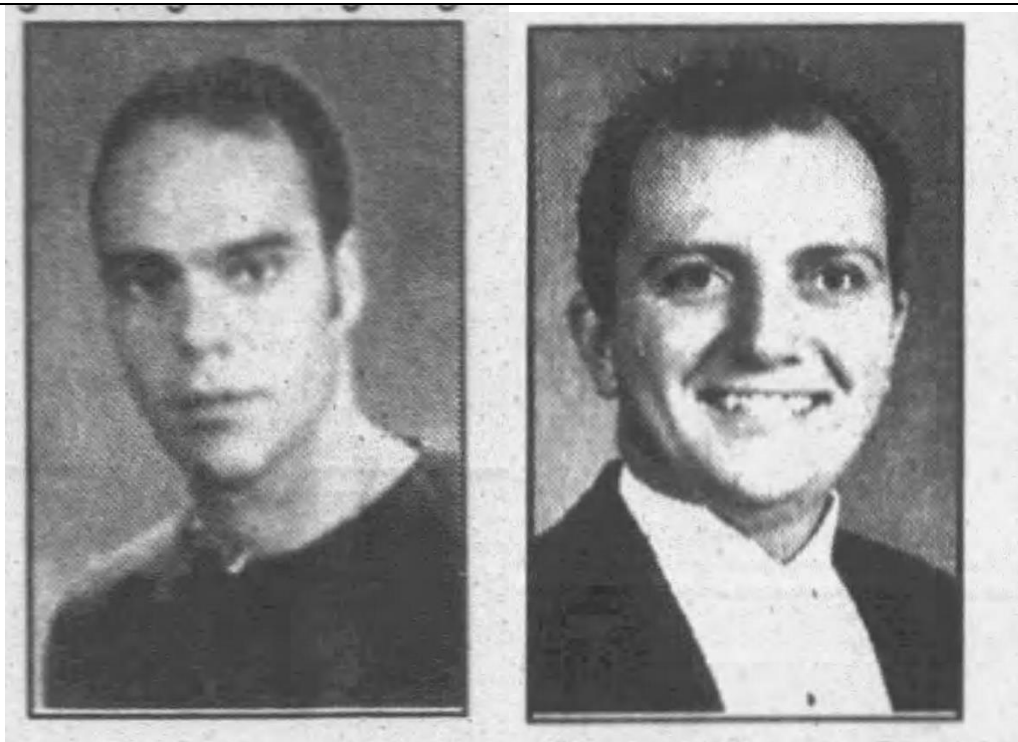


Incident Summary Page for the Hotshot Crew Line of Duty Death

Name of Hotshots LODD: Michael Todd Bishop Rodger Braithwaite	Incident Name: North Stansbury Fire
	Incident Date & Time: 08/23/2000
Hotshot Crew: Flame-N-Go	Incident Location: Salt Lake Field Office, Bureau of Land Management, Utah
Personal Information	
Michael Bishop, age 27, a native of Utah, was survived by his daughter, his parents and extended family. Rodger "Rodgie" Braithwaite, age 26, was survived by his son, his parents and extended family.	
Brief description	
On August 23, Michael Bishop and Rodgie Braithwaite members of the Flame-N-Go Hotshot Crew were assigned to the North Stansbury fire about forty miles west of Salt Lake City, Utah. The crew was helicoptered in to help suppress and mop up the 250 acre fire located in steep and rocky terrain. Around noon a squad of six, including Bishop and Braithwaite, noticed an incoming thunderstorm. With lightning, heavy rain and hail in the area, three crew members moved to a lower location. Bishop and Braithwaite along with another crew member took refuge under nearby trees. Lightning struck the trees where the three were located, causing injuries to all six of the squad. Bishop and Braithwaite suffered respiratory arrest. Emergency procedures, including CPR, were initiated on site and the injured firefighters were flown to the hospital by helicopter. Despite these efforts, Michael Bishop and Rodgie Braithwaite died of electrocution due to lightning.	
Links to more information on this incident:	
https://wlfalwaysremember.net/2000/08/23/michael-bishop-rodgie-braithwaite/	



Michael Bishop

Rodger Braithwaite

Lightning kills 2 firefighters on Utah prison

crew

By Frank Curreri
and Michael Vigh
SALT LAKE TRIBUNE

SALT LAKE CITY — Lightning struck and killed two state prisoners as they helped quash a wildfire.

In its 22 years of service, the Flame-N-Go inmate program had never lost a firefighter — until Wednesday, said Utah Department of Corrections spokesman Jack Ford.

Inmates Michael Bishop, 27, and Rodgie Braithwaite, 26, were scheduled to be paroled within two years.

They and four other inmate firefighters were hit by the bolt as they sought shelter from an intense flurry of lightning strikes in the area, according to National Interagency Fire Center officials.

Bishop and Braithwaite, who absorbed direct hits from the lightning, were taken by helicopter to the University of Utah's Intermountain Burn and Trauma Center in Salt Lake City and pronounced dead nearly an hour later, officials said.

The other victims, also flown to the burn center, had nonlife-threatening injuries. They were accompanied to the hospital by their crew leader, Department of Natural Resources supervisor Jarin Flinders, who was uninjured.

Inmates Ernest Chacon, 31, Benjamin Taliulu, 23, and Anthony Duran, 25, were treated and released. Inmate Michael Lindsay, 34, was expected to be released from the hospital Thursday.

Ford said the Flame-N-Go pro-

gram only accept the most well-behaved inmates.

"It means they had actually been model citizens, that they were trying to turn their lives around," he said. "We only take the best of the best."

Bishop, who had been serving time for a 1993 attempted criminal homicide, was scheduled for parole in July 2002, according to prison records. Braithwaite, incarcerated for automobile homicide, was scheduled for parole in October 2001. Both men were being held in the Utah State Prison's minimum-security section.

Therapists were at the prison Wednesday night to counsel inmates and staff, Ford said. The surviving members of Wednesday's crew will be allowed to drop out of the Flame-N-Go program if they wish, he said.

The 19-member team had been flown to the top of Stansbury Mountain on Wednesday, along with firefighters from the Army National Guard and an Idaho prison. The crews were helping to mop up a nine-day, 250-acre fire that was 75 percent contained, officials said.

William Alder, lead forecaster for the National Weather Service, said the storm moved slowly over the mountain, carried little rain and was relatively mild. However, there were 40 reported lightning strikes in the Stansbury area Wednesday afternoon.

"It appears the crew did follow all standard safety procedures," said Jim Springer, a Utah spokesman for the Interagency

"It appears the crew did follow all standard safety procedures. ... They had been working high on a ridge and moved down to lower ground."

Jim Springer

Fire Center. "They had been working high up on a ridge and moved down to lower ground. . . They moved to what they thought was a safe area, but unfortunately that was not safe enough."

When a single bolt of lightning strikes, "if the ground is wet and you're all huddling together — you'll all get hit," said Larry Burch, also a meteorologist with the National Weather Service in Salt Lake City.

Philip Bossart, emergency room director at University Hospital, said lightning typically injures a victim's brain and heart. In contrast to other forms of electrocution, where skin burns are pronounced, injuries to most lightning victims are internal.

Many lightning victims go into shock, feel hopelessly confused or experience bouts of temporary paralysis, Bossart said. As many as 30 percent do not survive, he said. "Most people either die right away," Bossart said, "or do really well."

Quality Car Care

LIGHTNING

Continued from A1

with no overhang, away from clusters of trees or rocks."

The six inmates were members of a prison work group that routinely battles fires, Department of Corrections spokesman Jesse Gallegos said. About 60 inmates participate in the firefighting program, nicknamed the "Flame-n-go's."

There were 20 inmates participating in this 37-person crew, which also included firefighters from the BLM and Utah National Guard.

Gallegos said he did not know if this was the first time an inmate from the work group had been killed while fighting fires.

"These guys literally put in thousand of hours every summer fighting

fires," he said. "This was just one of their firefighting sites."

Rigby said a fire investigation crew from Idaho was on its way to Utah to investigate the deaths.

There is no record of any previous deaths by lightning among firefighters in Utah since 1950, according to the National Weather Service.

This year, the need for firefighters has surged in Utah, as 1,477 fires burned 230,167 acres through Wednesday morning, according to the National Interagency Fire Center. Fire officials across the West are predicting the worst season in decades.

The fire in the Stansbury Mountains began on Saturday and had burned about 250 acres through Wednesday. Fire officials say the fire was about 75 percent contained despite small flare-ups. Steep rocky terrain and poor access con-

tinued to be a major concern.

Larry Burch, a meteorologist with the National Weather Service in Salt Lake City, said a strong storm passed over the Stansbury range around 1 p.m.

"We looked at the data and there were about 33 lightning strikes around the time of the incident," he said.

More storms were expected in the area, and state fire management officer Sheldon Wimmer said all crews had been pulled from the line.

"It's just hard to lose kids like this," Wimmer said. "I don't care if they're flame-n-go's or what — they're fighting fires and there's a real strong bond between firefighters. It's like losing family."

Herald reporter Marta Murvosh contributed to this report.