



Assignment

Making an Inference from Informational Text

Topic: Granite Mountain Hotshots

Your Assignment:

Read the research report below. .

Lost Brothers

By Tony Cerna

On June 30, 2013, nineteen of the twenty members of the Granite Mountain Hotshots crew perished in the Yarnell Hill Fire. It was the greatest loss of life for first responders in a single event since 9/11. The elite firefighting team died when the winds shifted as they were fighting the wildfire just outside of Phoenix, Arizona. All of their expert training could not save them as they deployed their “last resort” fire shelters in front of a blaze that was raging at more than 2000 degrees Fahrenheit.

The team had been previously situated in a burned out part of the terrain when they decided to move closer to the “safe” zone and evacuation route that had been designated for them. It is unclear specifically why the decision was made to do this, but it was this action that put the team directly in the wildfire’s path. With no way out, the men set up the fire-resistant shelters, they look like miniature tents, and got underneath them with hope that the fire would burn over the top of them and that they would be able to survive.

Only one member of the Granite Mountain Hotshots crew survived. Brendan McDonough was the lookout for the team, and he was about a mile away when the fire shifted and trapped his brothers. He listened on the radio as the call that they were okay never came.

The Granite Mountain Hotshots were based in Prescott, Arizona. After years of preparation, they were finally qualified as a “hotshot” crew in 2008. Hotshot firefighting teams are the elite in the wildfire firefighting world. They get the name because they are the crews that go fight the fire at its hottest part.

Wildfires are different than structure fires. Structure fires burn buildings. Wildfires burn trees, brush, plants, etc. When they get started, they use the brush and trees as fuel. The fuel must be removed, and backfires started, in order to get containment on a wildfire. The hotshot crews work to contain these raging blazes, but in order to do so, they must go right up into the front lines of the fire.

Although it took them a long time to become certified as hotshots, once they were, the Granite Mountain Hotshots were considered one of the best teams in the country. They were called upon by different states to assist. They spent months away at a time, leaving their families behind, as they deployed to various wildfires throughout the United States. They were the best of the best, and they made the sacrifices and took the risks that were needed to protect people and property from destruction.

During the four years since the devastating accident, various groups and people have established memorials and events to be sure that the Granite Mountain Hotshots’ bravery is forever remembered. The town of Yarnell, where the fire took the hotshots’ lives, has created the Granite Mountain Hotshots Memorial State Park. While there visitors can hike a trail and read about the men who perished that day. Each man has a plaque placed along the path.

Across the street from their old fire station, Captain Crossfit gym holds an annual fundraiser in the hotshots’ memory. The proceeds, or the money they raise, goes to the Arizona Wildlife and Incident Management Academy. These funds go to helping prepare wildlife firefighters so that they are well-skilled and equipped to successfully fight the blazes.

Brendan McDonough, or Donut as his brothers on the team used to call him, suffered from PTSD (Post Traumatic Stress Disorder) and depression following the deaths of his brothers. Eventually he worked his way out of this phase and found a purpose in helping to keep their memories alive. Brendan is a public speaker and talks about how one can work through a terrible tragedy to a place of meaningful contribution and peace. He also

wrote a book that tells his story; one in which he goes from near death as a drug addict to a member of an elite hotshot team, his “family”.

Only the Brave is a movie about the Granite Mountain Hotshots. It was released in 2017, and it focuses on the lives and brotherhood of the men on the crew. The Granite Mountain Hotshots’ story is not just about their tragic deaths. It is a story about a group of men, brothers as they saw themselves, who put everything on the line for others. That is something to be remembered.

Stems to Start:

I infer that the author thinks...

The author thinks that the _____ are...

I can tell that the author thinks...

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Your Response:
