

July 11, 2013

Nina Charlson

Eugene, Or 97401

Dear Prescott Fire Dept.

We have been so saddened by the passing of the Granite Mountain Hotshots. I have followed as much as I was able and you have done a magnificent job in showing honor and respect.

Our son, then 25 yrs. old, was killed LODD August 5, 2008 fighting Wildfires in Northern California. It was the Iron 44 incident when the helicopter crashed and 9 men died. I am assuming you remember that. While the cause of death was different their mission was much the same as the Granite Mountain Hotshots. They were spiked out and on the edge of the fire. Their remains were returned to us in ashes. We had a lot of public honor etc. also so we have a great deal in common with the survivors of the Granite Mountain Hotshots. Probably the biggest difference is that our fallen did not receive PSOB benefits and I am thinking this fallen crew will because of who they are employed by. But we have also appealed our rejection letter because of the direct authority the USFS had over the crew. That decision is still pending.

I say all the above not to draw attention to myself but to show what I have experienced but am 5 years further down the road of grief and finding that new normal. It is a very difficult road to walk. In my experience the first couple **years** I was still in such a daze. I thought I was functioning well and people thought "I was over it" but now that I am 5 years out I see how pathetic I was at 2 years. The third and fourth year were more emotional and the reality of things not going back to "normal" is there to stay. So support was needed then as much as the first two years. Now (I measure the years somewhat by summers because I am a teacher and have summers off) the sweet memories come quicker and easier. I was able to follow this tragedy and stay in a good healthy emotional place. But it has taken five years and I am sure there is more healing to take place.

The Wildland Firefighter Foundation supplied group counseling and it was a great benefit to us. I am also a part of the National Fallen Firefighters Support Network on facebook. That gives great opportunity for encouragement and also to be the encourager.

If I can be of assistance to anyone in anyway please do not hesitate to ask. We were helped by so many people in our time of need and I am ready to pay it forward.

Sincerely,

Nina Charlson

Nina L, Charlson Mother to Fallen Firefighter Scott Charlson 8-05-08

We will be attending services in Oregon for John Percin on Saturday.