

## **New Zealand, Australia Contingent to USA 2015**

### **“WE WORK AS ONE”**

### **Update # 5**

**7 September 2015**

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As you should have heard this week, we received a request from the USA to extend the Australian and NZ deployment for a second 14-day rotation. This means on Friday 11 Sept (your time), all those in the Australian and NZ deployment (71 of us total) will finish rotation one and then travel for two days rest and relaxation (R+R) before starting the second 14-day rotation.

The venue for the R+R will be at the Coeur d’Alene resort near Spokane, a central location to the fires making it easy for everyone to get to, there the team will get two days of R+R before travelling on Monday 14 Sept (your time) back to their various assigned fires.

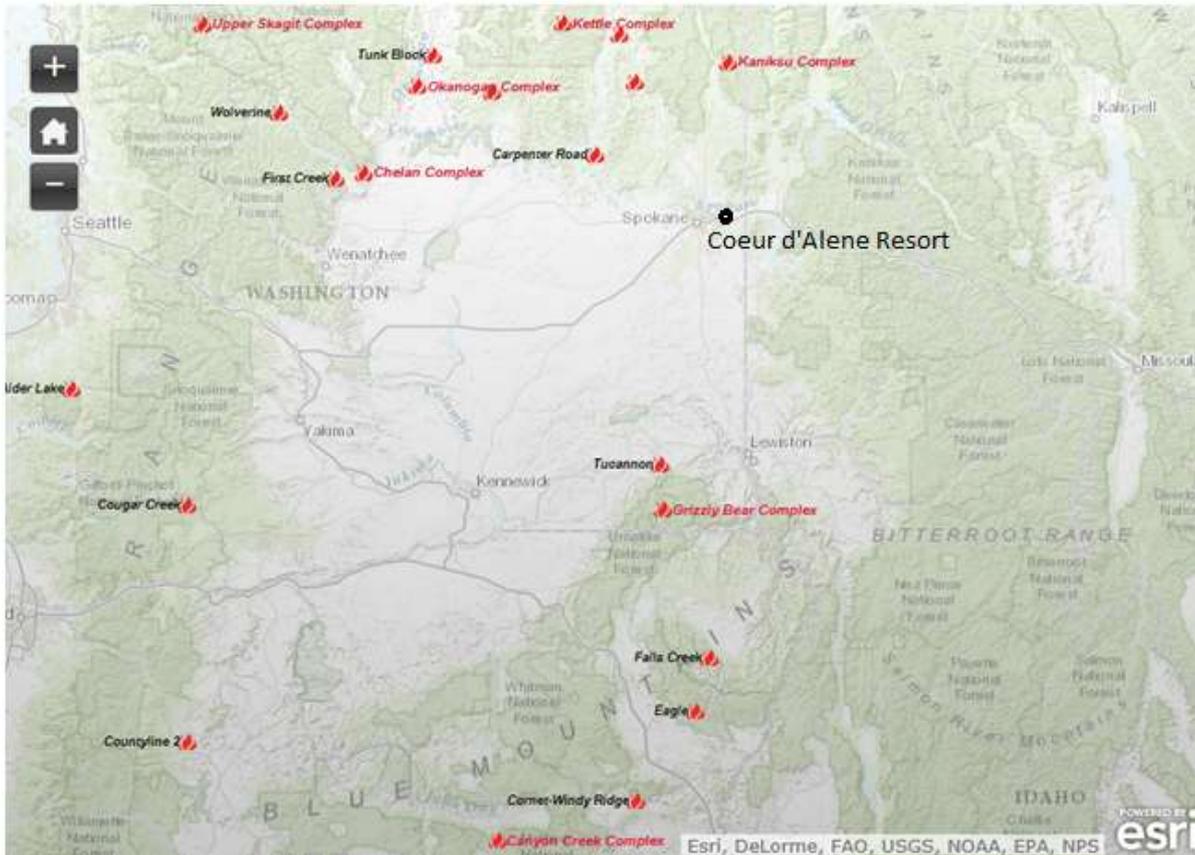
Given the daily changes we are now seeing, with personnel being moved around different fires, it is unlikely personnel will be reassigned back to the same fires or roles they had been working on prior to R+R. The team will get these new assignments on the last day of R+R.

Cooler temperatures and even the odd spot or rain is continuing to help contained the fires, but has also limited some of the containment options given some of the fuels are now too moist for burnout operations.

While we are seeing a downscaling in fire activity, it is important to remember that there is still a lot of fire on the ground and work needed to ensure containment of the fires they have, especially in the North West where the team is currently located.

Over the coming weekend the forecasters are indicating a return to warmer and breezier conditions (good for your R+R). While they are not thinking this will result in an increase in new fire starts, it will slow some of the progress in containing some fires.

The long-range forecast for the next 7 days is another cool change which should see further rain and cooler temperatures.



*Map: Showing location of Coeur d'Alene Resort and fires NZ crews are working on (Okanogan, Canyon Creek, Tunk, Kettle, Chelan, North Star (to the right of Okanogan), Eagle, and Grizzly Bear).*

Out of interest to those back home I asked the team if they could give me some comments on the day in the life of a Kiwi fire fighter in the USA. The following is one of the more clever replies I received that I thought I'd share with you...

### **A Day in the Life of a kiwi (flightless Bird) 10,000km away from home**

05:40 Awake and roll out of the nest.

05:45 Put Talons on and head out for preening.

05:45 Preen feathers and wash stunted wings.

05:50 Forage for food, discover scrambled eggs, bacon, potato hash, or for the smaller birds cereal and milk, and the worst coffee on the planet.

06:00 Briefing report by the Eight Bald Eagles for dissemination of daily tasks. Incident Controller, Planning, Logistics, Weather, Safety, Finance, Camp Boss, Information and Communications. Followed by breakdown into Branch, Division and Taskforce briefings.

06:20 Break from the Bald Eagles, gather foraging bag for lunch, re-clone the RT, fill chilly bin with ice and essential liquids, jump in 4 tonne flying machine (the 8 cylinder 6.7 litres ute) and head for the bush.

06:40 Find a fly-through coffee house to wash out the taste of the nesting spot coffee.

06:45 On the journey up the 38 mile river valley be careful not to bump into any other natives, including deer, Smokey the bear, Bruce the Mountain Lion, or Chippie (the chipmunk).

08:00 On arrival at the Silver Falls, gather all your fellow Rattle Snakes, Skippys, and Kiwis (if any) and have another chat about what the Eight Bald Eagles mentioned.

08:30 Despatch everyone for the day's activities (tasks), next four hours are spent driving between all Rattle Snakes, and Skippys making sure that tasks are being performed to the best of their ability. During task's drink as much water and Gatorade as you can,

12:30 Take foraging bag out and examine contents. Clean stunted wings.

- Two pieces of bread, with four slices of meat, and two slices of cheese
- Apple (or orange or nectarine)
- Bag of peanut MM's
- Bag of crackers
- Peanut butter and oat slice
- Bag of peanuts
- Chimuchanga
- Bag of broccoli heads
- Ranch dressing
- Muesli bar
- 2 x sachet of mayonnaise
- 2 x sachet of sauce
- Bag of Pretzels
- Bag of trail mix
- 2 x wet towel
- 2 x paper towel

Not your entire foraging bag needs to be consumed. Chippie will eat your trail mix if you offer it to him, if hand-feeding Chippie, wash stunted wings immediately after.

13:00 Back to tasks, more supervision of tasks being completed.

18:00 Roll out to Silver Falls or other gathering place to discuss the day's activities.

19:00 Head for nesting spot.

20:00 Arrive at nesting spot, if desired forage for more Chow Line (Clean stunted wings first).

20:30 Preen feathers and clean beak.

21:00 Check for any carrier pigeon mail.

21:30 Snore.

### **Useful links**

Please note that the guys will be in an area of good phone coverage during R+R, so no excuses for them not to be phone home.

If you have any messages you want to get to someone on the deployment you can post them on the Facebook site or send them to me and I will do my best to pass them on.

Don't forget to use the Facebook and website to help keep up to date on what is happening.

We've set up a Facebook site for friends and family to access photos plus regular updates on what's happening: the site is called "USA Wildfires 2015 – Australia/NZ Deployment". (It's a closed site, so you'll need to register to join.)

Another useful site giving up-to-date USA Situation reports is:

<https://www.nifc.gov/nicc/index.htm> (click on the situation report tab left side menu).

For more detailed information about the fires in the Northwest where the Kiwi crews are deployed: <http://gacc.nifc.gov/nwcc/>

You may also find the Friends and Family webpage useful that we have set up. This page is for those who don't have access to Facebook: <http://files.portal.em.vic.gov.au/refdocs/SCC-IILU.htm?v=3>

I'll send more news soon to keep you all up-to-date.

Cheers,

Tim

(On behalf of the Kiwi team)

### **Some photos from the team:**

Someone else is camping out with them  
(Gopher hole)





The team is teaching the Americans how to play cricket ..... but first you need the bats. Don't have them??? All good, just make them ☺

