UNCLE SAM'S FOREST RANGERS

Episode No. 31

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12:30 to 1:30 P.M. C.D.S.T. AUGUST 25, 1932 THURSDAY

ANNOUNCER: "Uncle Sam's Forest Rangers."

(ORCHESTRA: QUARTET)

ANNOUNCER: Now we take you to the National Forest. Last week, you remember, a serious fire situation developed on the Pine Cone District, where Forest Ranger Jim Robbins is in charge. A sudden rush of the flames would have caught the Winding Creek school-teacher, Miss Mary Halloway, in its path, had it not been for the timely arrival of Jerry Quick, Ranger Jim's young assistant. After a hard fight, Jim and Jerry succeeded in getting the fires checked, but the rest they had earned was short-lived. Three days later, fires broke out again on the Pine Cone District, and since that time our rangers and their men have been constantly battling the flames. -- We tune in at the fire camp just as dawn is breaking - it is about five o'clock in the morning - and here's Ranger Jim coming into camp after a night on the fire lines directing the various crews of fire fighters. He looks rather haggard. --

(SOUND OF HORSE COMING UP AT WALK)

JIM: Whoa, Dolly - (SIGHS AS IF TIRED)

BESS: (OFF) Is that you, Jim?

JIM: Why, Bess. What're you doing up here?

BESS: (COMING UP) I brought up the groceries they ordered last night, Jim. The cook said he needed them this morning, so I brought them up myself. I got here sometime after midnight.

JIM: Why didn't you have some man bring them up, Bess? A woman has no business driving that steep road at night.

BESS: All of the men down in the village are fighting fire. I just couldn't find anyone who seemed to know the road up here, and I couldn't think of these men going hungry after working all night. So I decided to bring them up myself.

JIM: Bess you're a brick. I can always bank on you.

BESS: Jim, you look terribly tired. How is the fire?

JIM: Pretty quiet this morning. If the wind don't come up after sun rise I think we can hold it. But, it depends on the weather more'n anything else. If the Weather Man'll be good to us today, - and keep the wind down, - I guess we can hold it. We connected up our line across the front on Bald Mountain last night.

BESS: Oh, dear. I hope the wind stays down. -- Promise me you'll take some rest, Jim. You know how exhausted you were last year.

JIM: Uh huh (WEAK CHUCKLE) The Weather Man sure could do us a big favor right now by sending a little rain this way.

BESS: I should say he could. -- Is Jerry all right, Jim?

JIM: Yep. I sent him to bed last night. He hadn't stopped going for two days. -- The boy's been doing great work on this fire, Bess. I've got him in charge of the crew on the head end and he's handling it in fine shape.

BESS: I'm so glad, I knew he'd make good.

JIM: Yep. He's a conscientious, hard-working boy. -- Jerry's got kind of a personal grudge against fires now too, you know. That lightning fire we had last week came near catching the schoolma'm.

BESS: I know. Mary certainly had a narrow escape. -- She still has hard work getting around with her wrenched ankle, but she's been spending most of her time at the Station anyhow. She offered to come up here with me last night for company but her ankle's so lame I thought she'd better stay home.

(SOUND OF AUTOMOBILE COMING UP)

JIM: Listen, is that a car coming?

BESS: Yes. I wonder who it is so early in the morning.

(MOTOR STOPS)

JIM: Looks like Bert Ellsworth.

BESS: So it is.

JIM: Yep. It's the Supervisor, sure as you're alive -- Hello there Bert - Starting the day kinda early, ain't you?

BESS: Good morning, Mr. Ellsworth.

ELLSWORTH: (COMING UP) Well, I declare, Mrs. Robbins, I didn't expect to find you up here. Hello Jim. Have you got the Missus fighting fire too?

JIM: (CHUCKLES) Next thing to it, Bert. We ran a little short of grub last night and the cook phoned an emergency order to Winding Creek. Bess couldn't get anyone to bring it up so she came herself.

ELLSWORTH: You don't mean to say you drove up over that road in the dark?

BESS: Yes, but I'm waiting for good daylight before I go back.

ELLSWORTH: You'd better. I don't like the idea of you driving a car over that old logging trail, Mrs. Robbins. Why, it was all I could do to get through. Where are all the Winding Creek men?

BESS: They're all fighting fire.

ELLSWORTH: Jim, these fires of yours've got me worried. I thought I'd better come up and see how things're going.

JIM: She jumped the line on the Bald Mountain side and made a run yesterday afternoon, Bert. We lost five hundred acres.

ELLSWORTH: That was a bad wind yesterday. It must have fanned that fire up pretty hot.

JIM: Yes, it was too hot to handle. We got all the men out safely, though, but we lost a few tools. It quieted down after sunset and I threw in every man I could spare from the other sectors. We have a line around 'er again this morning.

ELLSWORTH: That's spendid -- I hope you can hold it now.

JIM: I think we can, Bert, if the weather gives us any kind of a break.

ELLSWORTH: The weather reports aren't very encouraging.

JIM: (WEARILY) No. If we do get another wind today like the one that fanned us yesterday, I don't know what'll happen. -- I wish it would rain.

ELLSWORTH: Have you determined what caused the fire yet, Jim?

JIM: The big one on Bald Mountain's a man - caused fire -- a cigarette along the road.

ELLSWORTH: A cigarette fire, eh?

JIM: Yes. There's another one up in the high country - a hangover from that lightning storm we had last week, but we've got it fairly safe now.

BESS: Oh Jim, why don't you snatch a little rest while you can. You look all played out.

JIM: A little breakfast with some good strong coffee'll fix me up, Bess.

ELLSWORTH: Yes, let's have some breakfast. I want to get lined up on the fires, and then you turn in, Jim. I'll relieve you.

BESS: I'll go and see if the cook has breakfast started. I don't suppose he would let me help.

JIM: (CHUCKLES A LITTLE) No, I reckon not.

BESS: (GOING OFF) Well, I'll go over anyway.

ELLSWORTH: Got your fire map handy, Jim?

JIM: Yeah - here it is - I've got the fire lines sketched in there - see? As of midnight. We haven't lost any ground since.

ELLSWORTH: Hmm! I see. This upper end is where you're having the most trouble, eh?

JIM: Yeah, there's a heavy stand of spruce and fir on that slope of Bald Mountain. It don't take much wind to put the fire up in the crowns there. That was one of the hottest crown fires yesterday I ever tried to handle.

ELLSWORTH: Hmm, that's bad. Where've you got your camps?

JIM: Well, this is the base camp here, and here's one here, at Buckley Springs and one over on this side on this little creek. I have Slim's outfit packing supplies from here to the other camps. -- We've got emergency telephone lines into these two lower camps, and the other one up here in the high country back of Bald Peak, they're using the new portable radio set up there -- communicating with the Lookout station. Harry takes their reports on his set and relays the messages to the base camp by telephone.

ELLSWORTH: I see. -- How is the radio working?

JIM: Perfectly, so far. The boys've been reporting to the Lookout Station regularly. Harry relays their messages in here.

BESS: (OFF) Oh, Jim.

JIM: Yeah, Bess?

BESS: (OFF) Breakfast is ready for you and Mr. Ellsworth now.

JIM: All right, Bess. -- How about it, Bert?

ELLSWORTH: Sure. We'll eat now, Jim, -- and come back to this later.

JIM: Come on. -- (SIGHS) Whew. It sure takes an effort for old man Robbins to pull himself up on his feet.

ELLSWORTH: Your eyes sure look bleary. When did you get some sleep last, Jim?

JIM: (WEAK CHUCKLE) Well, now, let's see. I reckon it was yesterday morning I snatched a couple of winks.

ELLSWORTH: Well, right after breakfast you're going to bed.

JIM: We'll see how things go. I want to get reports in from the fire camps first of all. -- Come on, Bert, let's get at this breakfast.

ELLSWORTH: I'm coming. But you understand now -- I'm ordering you to bed.

JIM: (WEAK CHUCKLE) We'll see how things go, Bert. --

BESS: (UP) Here we are, Mr. Ellsworth. Have a cup of coffee?

ELLSWORTH: You bet I will, Mrs. Robbins. -- Thanks.

BESS: This one's for you, Jim. It'll make you feel better.

JIM: M-m-m that goes pretty good - Sure warms up the old insides.

BESS: Help yourself to the bacon and here's some hot cakes, Mr. Ellsworth.

ELLSWORTH: All right. Thanks. Aren't you going to have some breakfast, Mrs. Robbins?

BESS: No, I'm not hungry.

JIM: Hey now, Bess, you've been up all night; you certainly need to eat something.

BESS: Really, Jim, I couldn't eat a thing. I think I'd better start back now. I want to get down the mountain before those big trucks start up here. The road is so rough and narrow --

JIM: Yes, you're right Bess. I don't want you to meet those trucks in the road -- but you'd better drink a little coffee.

ELLSWORTH: Here you just sit down here on this log, Mrs. Robbins and I'll get you some -

BESS: Thank you very much, but I'll fix myself something when I get back to the Ranger Station. -- I wish you would take some rest Jim. You need it so badly. -- Mr. Ellsworth, can't you make Jim rest a little? Every time he has a bad fire he works till he's exhausted.

ELLSWORTH: Yes - I'll see to that, Mrs. Robbins. I'll take charge of this fire myself.

JIM: Oh, I'm all right. Here, let me help you into the car, Bess.

BESS: Thank you, Jim. (CAR DOOR SLAMS; MOTOR STARTS)

JIM: Goodbye Bess.

ELLSWORTH: (WITH HIM) Goodbye, Mrs. Robbins.

BESS: Goodbye. Now you take care of yourself, Jim.

(CAR FADES OUT)

(PAUSE)

ELLSWORTH: There's a fine little woman, Jim.

JIM: I couldn't run the district without Bess.

ELLSWORTH: (AFTER PAUSE) Well, let's finish these flapjacks.

JIM: All right, Bert.

MAN'S VOICE: (OFF) Oh, Mr. Robbins, they want you on the telephone.

JIM: All right, coming right up. (PAUSE) Hello! hello! Yes this is Jim. Yes, Harry. -- Huh? -- I was afraid of that. Smoking up pretty bad, eh? The Supervisor's here; we'll go right up. Give the camp here a report on the smoke every half hour, will you, Harry? -- Have you heard anything from Jerry by radio? -- He has, eh? Well, we'll get right up there -- goodbye.

ELLSWORTH: What's wrong, Jim?

JIM: The Lookout says the wind has come up ten points in the last hour. Smoke's increasing all along the head end.

ELLSWORTH: The humidity reading is way down this morning. Looks like trouble, don't it? - How about more men?

JIM: Yes, we're going to need 'em. Jerry's time keeper reported by radio that the fire's running inside the lines already this morning. If the wind comes up it may jump the line.

ELLSWORTH: How many more men will you need?

JIM: A hundred, with crew bosses and time keepers and equipment complete -- and three day's supplies with them.

ELLSWORTH: Will that be enough? What about relief for the crew that worked last night?

JIM: I reckon a hundred will do. I relieved ten crews at midnight, and they'll be ready to go back on the line now. But you better have Roy down at your office line up the next fifty men on your list, in case we need 'em.

ELLSWORTH: All right.

JIM: How about another string of pack mules?

ELLSWORTH: Okay. Roy has 'em all arranged for.

JIM: He'll need to send 'em up by truck so they'll be ready to supply these new crews.

ELLSWORTH: Let me make a list so I won't forget something. -- Let's see. -- one hundred men fully equipped -- Three days' supplies for 'em -- A string of pack mules by truck. I think there's about twenty head ready.

JIM: That's good -- And get two plows and four more pumps with hose.

ELLSWORTH: Just a minute - two tractors and plows -- Four pumps -- with hose -- we'll have to wire the depot for those.

JIM: Well, we'll need 'em for mop-up work if we don't get 'em today.

ELLSWORTH: A thousand feet of hose with each pump?

JIM: Yes, that'll be enough. -- And put down a hundred bed rolls.

ELLSWORTH: One hundred bed rolls (LAUGHS) You look like you could use about two of those yourself.

JIM: (SLIGHT CHUCKLE) When I do get a chance at one I'm going to make full use of it. -- What's the chance of getting some more portable radios? I could use at least four more of the ten pound sets on the fire lines and a sixty pound set for the base camp so I can keep in direct touch with 'em.

ELLSWORTH: I'll see what I can do, but I doubt if we can get 'em -- Let's see its going on six now. I'll tell you what you do, Jim -- you lie down here and rest while I 'phone the office and get this order in. (GOING OFF) A little rest'll do you a lot of good.

JIM: We'll see, Bert. (CALLS) Oh, Bert. Tell Roy to get those men moving up here just as fast as he can load the trucks.

ELLSWORTH: (OFF) Leave everything to me, Jim.

(MUSICAL INTERLUDE)

(SOUND OF FIRE CRACKLING, OFF, AND SHOVELS AND MATTOCKS AT WORK, AXES CHOPPING, AND MEN SHOUTING, -- OFF)

JERRY: Oh, hello Jim -- Mr. Ellsworth said you were down at base camp.

JIM: Where did you see him, Jerry?

JERRY: He went by here about an hour ago, - inspecting the line.

JIM: Bert, the old rascal, he tried to get me to lie down and then run off and leave me asleep.

JERRY: He said a hundred fresh men are coming in.

JIM: Yep.

JERRY: Gosh! I hope they get here pretty soon.

JIM: Jerry, I'm afraid you're working in too close to the fire. It's going to get too hot for the men before that line's finished.

JERRY: Yeah, that's right (COUGHING) Darn the smoke! (ANGRILY) If that wind would just change for a few minutes and give us a chance!

JIM: We've got to take it as it comes, son. -- I'll tell you what you do, Jerry -- Get that pump on the Big Spring sector and have the crew move it up here, - see? There's a good spring down in this draw, and if you can get that pump into action and cool the blaze down as it reaches the fire line you may be able to hold it.

JERRY: Yessir. I'll try it.

JIM: I'm going over to see how Joe's crew is getting along now, and I'll be back in half an hour.

JERRY: All right, Jim. I'll get that pump on 'er here right away.

(MUSICAL INTERLUDE)

(ROAR AND CRACKLE OF FLAMES. NOISE OF CHOPPING & DIGGING AND OCCASIONAL SHOUTS OF MEN, OFF - CONTINUES INTERMITTENTLY THROUGH FOLLOWING)

JERRY: (OFF) Hey Jim! - Jim!

JIM: Yeah - what's the matter, Jerry?

JERRY: (COMING UP) Say, Jim, there's spot fires breaking out all over that slope across the canyon! The whirlwind a while ago must've scattered sparks across this whole stretch of line. I had men out hunting for anything that caught, but it looks like I didn't send 'em far enough. I better send a crew over there to round 'em up, hadn't I?

JIM: Yes, right away, Jerry.

JERRY: (CALLS) Hey, Arvo! Take your crew across the canyon and get those spot fires. -- Step on it, Arvo. Get 'em all - every one! - (TO JIM) Sparks must have dropped over there like they were sprinkled with a pepper shaker!

JIM: She's burning hot all right!

JERRY: Gee. This smoke's sure hard on your eyes, isn't it?

JIM: Taint exactly pleasant, Jerry. -- Look, there's one of your men going after that big dead tree in there.

JERRY: Yeah. That's Billy. He's one of the best boys in the crew.

JIM: It'll help a lot to have that one down. She's standing there blazing like a torch and showering sparks all over the scenery.

JERRY: Yeah. Billy'll get 'er down.

JIM: It's burning pretty hot in there.

JERRY: Yeah. It sure is, Jim. I'd better go in there and help him. (CALLS AS HE GOES OFF) Hey, hand me that other ax there, will you? I wanta help Billy get that snag down.

(PAUSE - SOUND OF CHOPPING, OFF)

JIM: (CALLS) Hey there, watch out! - Better leave it, Jerry! the smoke and heat'll get you both! - (TO SELF) By George, the boys are going to get that snag down, sure enough -- (SHOUTS QUICKLY) Hey, look out, there!

(CRASH OF FALLING TREE; EXCITED SHOUTS OF MEN, OFF)

JIM: My gosh! that tree kicked back off the stump as it fell! It hit Billy! (SHOUTS) Come on you fellows! Help me get the boy outa there. -- (RUNNING) Jerry, get back outa that fire!

(CONFUSED SHOUTING; ROAR AND CRACKLE OF FLAMES UP)

JIM: Get ahold under his legs there! -- That's right -- Easy now! -- All right, we can lay 'im down here, boys. -- Jack, get that first-aid kit!

JERRY: (COMING UP PANTING) Jim! -- He's -- hurt pretty bad -- isn't he?

JIM: I'm afraid so, Jerry. -- You better go back to the base camp with Billy here, Jerry, - soon as I see what we can do in the way of first aid. Rush 'im down to the hospital from there by truck.

JERRY: All right -- I'm getting -- my wind back -- now I guess --

JIM: That's good, Jerry. -- (CALLS) Hey, you fellows over there! Don't try to work in so close to the fire! -- I don't want to have to send my whole crew to the hospital. --

(MUSICAL INTERLUDE)

(SOUND OF HORSE WALKING)

JIM: Whoa, Dolly. (HORSE STOPS) Hold it, old girl. (GRUNTS IN DISMOUNTING) Good old Dolly (PATS HORSE'S NECK) I bet you're just as tired as I am - huh, Dolly? -- Well, here comes the Supervisor, Dolly -- lookin' kinda bleary-eyed too.

ELLSWORTH: (OFF) Hi there, Jim.

JIM: Well, Bert. I think we've got this fire conquered. Nothing but a whirlwind can take it away from us now.

ELLSWORTH: Yes, Jim, it's looking good this evening. It's quiet all along the south side.

JIM: I'm doggone glad to hear it, Bert.

ELLSWORTH: Yep. The new camp's in, and we've already got three miles of held line built on that sector. Things are looking better, Jim.

JIM: Yeah. When the wind changed and let Jerry's crew get in on the head end -- that was the turning point. That boy did a great job, Bert. He worked like a Trojan.

ELLSWORTH: Yes, he did. I'll have to compliment him. It's been quite an experience for him.

JIM: It's been a mighty trying experience. When the fire line was finished and the wind went down the reaction set in. He was almost in tears.

ELLSWORTH: Yes, it's been a trying time for all of us. That boy getting hurt. You know, I'm rather worried about him, Jim. Let's go over and find Jerry -- maybe he'll have some news.

JIM: All right -- Well, I reckon some of the boys'll have a chance to unroll their beds and get some sleep now. They sure need it.

ELLSWORTH: Well now, it seems to me we were saying something this morning about <u>you</u> getting some sleep too.

JIM: (<u>CHUCKLES</u>) I couldn't make it, Bert. The fire was burning too hot.

ELLSWORTH: Well, you're going to get some sleep tonight, Jim, if I have to get a crew of men to hold you down.

JIM: (<u>CHUCKLES</u>) I guess you won't have to do that, this time. -- Here comes Jerry. He looks pretty much all in too.

JERRY: (<u>COMING UP</u>) Say, Jim --

JIM: Hi there, Jerry.

ELLSWORTH: Hello there, Quick. You look tired, boy.

JERRY: I am, kinda, Mr. Ellsworth -- Say, Jim --

JIM: Yeah?

JERRY: I just got work that Billy - the boy that got hit when that burning snag came down - he died at the hospital this afternoon.

JIM: I'm mighty sorry, Jerry. He was badly hurt all right.

JERRY: We notified his family in Willow Glen, but they couldn't get there in time. -- You know, Jim -- it sorta gets me -- losing Billy that way. -- He was in my crew -- and I feel sorta responsible.

JIM: The person who started this fire is responsible, Jerry. If the people who cause forest fires realized how much destruction and misery they cause, their consciences would never let them sleep again.

(FADEOUT)

ANNOUNCER: Folks, we've seen today what a bad fire means. Valuable timber destroyed, watershed values ruined, game and wild life killed, scenic beauty changed to blackened waste, - and human lives sacrificed, - that is the toll that fire takes in our forests. And ninety per cent of the forest fires in the United States are man-caused, and therefore preventable. Most of them are the result of human carelessness. Folks, we must stop this terrible loss and destruction. We must use the utmost care with fire in the woods.

Next Thursday at this same hour, we shall take you to the national forest again. "Uncle Sam's Forest Rangers" is a presentation of the National Broadcasting Company, with the cooperation of the Forest Service, United States Department of Agriculture.

The role of Ranger Jim is played by Harvey Hayes. Others in today's cast:

is/11:30 A.M.
August 23, 1932