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Incident Name: Big Elk Meadows Fire near Lyons, CO

Date: 7/18/2002, 1845 hours

Personnel: 2 lives lost

Age:

Agency/Organization: Hawkins & Powers Aviation under contract to the US Forest Service

Position:

Summary:

Rick Schwartz, pilot, age 57

Milt Stollak, pilot, age 56

Pilots Schwartz and Stollak were operating Air Tanker 123, an aircraft carrying 2,000 gallons of agent and 550 gallons of fuel. They were in the process of performing a fire retardant drop on the Big Elk fire near Lyons, Colorado. The plane had flown 7 previous air attack missions during the day. During the approach for an eighth drop, the left wing of the aircraft separated from the fuselage. Fire began as the wing separated, and the aircraft pitched nose down until it crashed into the terrain. Both pilots were killed in the crash. The aircraft involved in this crash was a World War II era PB4Y-2 Privateer which had originally been used as a military aircraft. (from the summary sent in to the USFA Memorial Database)

In December of 2002, the United States Forest Service permanently grounded all PB4Y-2 aircraft in its fleet, as well as all C-130A aircraft -- 33 aircraft in all. A C-130A had been involved in a [fatal structure-failure crash](#) earlier in the summer, and prior to that [a C-130A had crashed in 1994](#) . and in France in 2000.





Photo of the plane at the memorial site in Broomfield, CO. The plane is a red and white tanker aircraft, heavily decorated with flowers and ribbons. It is parked on a tarmac with a fence in the foreground.



Photo of the memorial location in Broomfield, CO.

Viking Prayer
 Lo there do I see my Father
 Lo there do I see my Mother
 Lo there do I see my sisters and my brothers
 I see the line of my people back to the beginning
 They do call to me to take my place
 In the walls of Vahalia
 Where the brave may live forever.

*In memory of our fallen
 firefighters...*
 July 18, 2002

RICK LEE SCHWARTZ 1963 - 2002	MILTON BERNARD STOLLAK 1946 - 2002
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Photo of the memorial location in Broomfield, CO. The image shows the memorial card and flowers.



[Reinhold Ross](#) and [Michael Kyatt](#) are wildland firefighters.



□ Please support the [Wildland Firefighter Foundation](#)