

Fresno Kings Ranger Unit

Facility History



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Introduction

This book started out as a simple list of facilities, both past and current, and has grown into what you see on the following pages. The original idea was to document some of the history of the Unit by looking at the facilities and when they were placed in service, taken out of service or, for the current facilities, how long they had been in service. As we looked at the list we thought it would be appropriate to write a brief history of each one, if we could find any history on them and then the idea for pictures was brought forward so more work was done. As we have started to dig deeper into this we have discovered how little we know about the history of both the Unit and the Schedule "A" operations that were established under its guidance. Much of the material from the early days was discarded with the thought that it was not needed or was in the way. This project would not have been possible without the help of many retired or current employees who graciously shared their personal photos and agreed to be interviewed regarding their careers and what they remembered about the unit. Every attempt has been made to make the information in the book as accurate as possible and if you find errors we welcome your input. One other thing we discovered is that this book may never truly be called a final edition. As we continue to receive information and pictures from our "old timers" we continue to add information. It is an on-going project and we will continue to update it as more information becomes available.

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Fresno Kings Ranger Unit Facility History

The beginnings of the Fresno-Kings Unit can be found as early as the fire season of 1916 through 1918. With World War I in full swing in Europe, forest and agriculture commodities were desperately needed as the country geared up to support and later fight in the war. Fresno and Kings Counties agricultural crops, especially wheat, were in need of protection from fire. Under the direction of the State Forester, twenty-nine fire companies and four fire patrolmen were organized and equipped by the summer of 1918. The ideal fire truck of 1918 carried eight 3-gallon chemical extinguishers, five 10-gallon milk cans, two buckets, three canteens, five shovels, a pick, an axe, a wire cutter, a torch and a box of sacks (Clar,1959).

This system of fire protection continued to evolve until the passage of the Clark-McNary Act of 1924. The act provided federal monies to assist the States with developing organized fire protection and in response to CDF's 1924 Fire Plan, the Fresno – Kings Unit was organized in 1926 under its first Unit Chief, A. A. Miller.

Although, the protection of agricultural commodities was still the primary focus of the Unit, the appointment of William Blasingame, Vice-President of the California Cattlemen's Association, to the State Board of Forestry in 1928 brought the need for protection of valuable rangeland in the foothills of eastern and western Fresno County to the forefront of fire protection. To protect these resources the earliest fire facilities were Fort Miller FFS (now Millerton FFS), Squaw Valley FFS, the McKenzie Fire Camp in eastern Fresno County and the Panoche FFS Station in western Fresno County.

As the Great Depression overtook the country in the early 1930's, labor became readily available. CDF was well on its way at that time with the 1933 Master Fire Plan designating the desired locations for detection, fire control, administrative, communications and associated facilities but lacked both funding and personnel to complete the plan. With the aid of the Civilian Conservation Corps (C.C.C.) and the Works Product Administration (WPA), construction of detection, fire control, and administration facilities for the Unit proceeded rapidly. Blasingame Station, Copper Peak Lookout, Piedra and Coalinga Stations were established in the 1930's. With the start of World War II, wildland fire protection was deemed to be of the utmost necessity by military and civilian officials and the remaining fire stations were all completed by 1948 including the completion of Miramonte Conservation Camp #5. Of the six adult conservation camps authorized in 1948, Miramonte is the oldest existing conservation camp in service today.

In 1948, a brick manufacturing plant was placed in service at the Fort Millerton Forest Fire Control Station, (now Millerton FFS) and the manufacturing of what was known as Millerton brick began. Through the period of 1952 to 1960 many of CDF's fire stations were given a substantial remodel from the early tent or metal buildings of the 1930's using this economical and attractive brick.

In 1955 the Fresno Air Attack Base was added to the Unit operating from the Fresno airport terminal at Chandler Field. The earliest air operations were fire patrol planes which flew out of Fresno (Chandler) and Coalinga airports.

The air program was moved to Hammer Field in 1960, which was a World War II Army Air Corps facility and now is the Fresno Yosemite International Airport.

In 1994 the Fresno Air Attack Base and the Emergency Command Center were completely remodeled and co-located at the Fresno Yosemite Airport. The airbase, under CalFire ceased operations in 2012.

The airbase and ECC were jointly operated with the U.S. Forest Service, Sierra National Forest. Fresno-Kings operated one of CDF's first helitack crews in 1969 and was based at Sanger. In 1972 the helicopter was moved to Columbia.

The earliest Schedule 'A' contract was with Kings County in 1945. CDF was contracted by Kings County to operate the County Fire Department until 1970. In 1948, the Westside Fire Protection District contracted with CDF and was the first Schedule 'A' contract in Fresno County. In 1950, under the leadership of William Pennington, State Forest Ranger IV, the Mid-Valley Fire Protection District joined CDF and the Unit headquarters was moved from the County Fair Grounds to the newly completed facility at Sanger. In 1978, Fig Garden Fire Protection District contracted for services and remained a part of the fire district until January 1, 2006 when the contract was terminated and Fresno City Fire took over the fire protection for Fig Garden. In the early 1980's Friant and Table Mountain Volunteers were added. The cooperative agreements were consolidated on July 1, 1994 under the name Fresno County Fire Protection District. The District provides fire protection services to Parlier, Mendota, Huron, and San Joaquin cities and protects 2566 square miles or nearly 50% of the total area in Fresno County. There are currently 5 stand-alone PCF companies, 1 PCF station co-located on a State facility, 11 stand alone, career Staffed district stations, 3 co-located stations (Sch A & B) career staffed stations, a total of 12 district engines, 1 ladder truck, 1 squad with career staffing daily, and 9 state stations housing 12 engines.

Completed in the early 1940's, Cottonwood Station was the only CDF Schedule 'B' station in Kings County and was closed in 1986. Murietta FFS, Panoche FFS and the Murietta Conservation Camp were closed in 1968. Copper Peak Lookout was vandalized and destroyed by fire in 1985. Black Mountain Lookout and Bear Mountain Lookout were closed in the late 1980's.

Listed below are the past & current Unit Chiefs.

FKU Unit Chiefs

Dates	Names
1926	A. A. Miller
1927 - 1943	Evan Joy
1944 - 45	LeRoy T. Neil
1945	Curtis Lindley
1946 - 51	A. Roy Bengard
1952 - 77	William Pennington
1977 - 83	Carl "Bud" Armstrong
1983 - 2001	Fred Batchelor
2001 - 2005	Steve Sunderland
2005	Ted Mendoza (8 months)
2005-2006	Stan Craig (Interim) (4-6 months)
2006-2007	Becky Robertson
2007-2014	Keith Larkin
2014- present	Mark Johnson

Listed below are excerpts from the Fresno Bee (Republican) which reflect some of the early history of the Unit and Fire Districts.

3-1-1935 Board of supervisors agreed to request that the state division of forestry to station another fire warden in the Coalinga, Kettleman, & Kreyenhagen districts of the western Fresno County. The district currently has one state forestry department man and one truck for fighting forest, grass, or grain fires during the dry season.

3-9-1937 The work of the division of forestry is principally to protect mountain country outside the national forests and property outside the incorporated areas from fire loss. In preparation for the approaching fire season, a truck & crew will be stationed at the McKenzie Station on the Auberry Highway, another camp will be located at Piedra, a third crew will be maintained at Coalinga. A CCC stub camp at Squaw Valley will be under the supervision of the department and another crew will work from the Fresno office of the division. In addition, a truck & driver will be on duty working from Mendota. Besides these units, lookouts will be maintained at Bear Mountain and Copper peak in the low Sierra and a third will be stationed at Smith Mountain on the Coalinga side of the Valley. By order of George D. Nordenholt, state director of natural resources, Evan Joy is authorized to exercise general supervision over the newly formed Westside Country Fire Protection District, a district organized to protect property surrounding Coalinga.

6-13-1937 Fire fighting in the foothills and plains of Fresno County will be conducted on a larger front this year, more men of experience will man equipment of the CDF & trucks of special districts – equipment of the newest type will be in use for the first time and more money will be spent in extinguishing grass, grain and residential fires. This service provided by the division of forestry, augmented by special fire districts is for the protection of farmers and residents outside of incorporated cities and under the supervision of Evan Joy, state fire warden for Fresno County, this year reaches its greatest peak in point of manpower and equipment. Forty two men are now stationed in strategic points of the county and augmented by volunteers. Besides the equipment at the Fresno headquarters, trucks are stationed at Squaw Valley, Piedra, McKenzie Station, Dos Palos, Coalinga, and Huron. Joy has ten men stationed @ Squaw Valley under the direction of Ernest English; William Green is in charge of six men at Piedra; ten men work under the supervision of Loren Wood at McKenzie station. N.O. Stephens operates the truck which protects the Dos-Palos Mendota area and Sam Bennett operated the truck at Huron. Volunteer crews man these trucks when on fire duty. There are 12 men under John Wade at Coalinga. The Fresno division is now housed at the new quarters at the fairgrounds, constructed by the Works Progress Administration.

12-9-1947 Backers of the proposed Mid Valley County Fire protection District, propose the establishment of the district. Under the proposal, upon which rural dwellers will ballot on December 22nd in a special election, 24 fire stations would be set up in areas established by the Pacific Board of Fire Underwriters that are not now in a fire district or in a incorporated city. The proposed stations would be located in or near the following communities: Parlier, Tranquillity, Burrell, Caruthers, Easton, Fresno, Clovis, Sanger, Fowler, Selma, Laton, San Joaquin, Riverdale, Raisin City, Butler, Monmouth, Calwa, Pinedale, Friant, Helm, Kingsburg, South Dos Palos, Reedley & Firebaugh.

12-14-1947 Registered voters in most of the unincorporated areas of Fresno County will vote in 35 precincts Monday, December 22nd on a proposal for the creation of a county wide rural fire protection district. Proponents of the district to be known as Mid Valley County Fire Protection District have estimated the cost of purchasing equipment and providing fire houses at between \$350,000 and \$400,000.

The initial tax charge which will be required is believed to be about 30 cents per \$100 assessed valuation but this will level at or near 10 or 11 cents after the initial capital expenditures are paid. The district will include all the unincorporated lands between the Associated Pipe Line along the foothills of the coast range mountains to the Friant Kern Canal, except property in incorporated cities and existing fire districts.

1-6-1948 The Fresno County Board of Supervisors today declared the Mid Valley County Fire Protection District, favored at the polls December 22nd by a 724 to 703 vote, void because of election irregularities. Deputy District Attorney Robert M. Wash advised the supervisors that in his opinion the election is void for the reason that no provision was made in the election call for a voting place for residents of the Monroe School District west of Selma.

6-23-1948 The 1948 Fresno County Grand Jury late yesterday termed the counties failure to provide rural fire protection a disgrace, curtly recommended the board of supervisors give the sheriff's and district attorney's offices more adequate personnel and urged ambulance company crews to take first aid training. It also proposed the county immediately buy two new fire trucks to protect Fresno's suburbs. It declared Fresno County is the only San Joaquin valley county which does not assume complete responsibility for rural fire protection, called upon the supervisors to hire full crews to man the six fire trucks spotted around the county and demanded they place on the November general election ballot a proposal to establish a county wide fire protection plan. On December 22, 1947 a special election was held to determine whether a county fire protection plan should be adopted. Because two precincts did not receive ballots and because the plan carried by only 20 votes the election was declared invalid. The 1947 grand jury recommended that the issue be placed on the next countywide ballot to allow the citizens of the county an opportunity to vote again in a proper election.

The state forestry service is responsible by law for the watershed & and forests and the rural fire protection is responsibility of the individual counties. Fresno is the only San Joaquin valley county which does not assume complete responsibility for rural fire protection, except for a token effort. Fresno county owns six fire trucks and these are dispersed as follows; A truck is placed at the Fresno fairgrounds and is there on a year round basis, manned by one man. A truck is maintained at Caruthers without personnel, being operated by volunteers, a truck is placed at the Hammond Ranch west of Mendota and is manned by one man from May 1st to October 31st. A truck is kept at Parlier on a year round basis, manned entirely by volunteers and a truck is maintained at San Joaquin with one man from May 1st to Oct. 31st (the balance of the year it is staffed with volunteers) and one small, inadequate truck is kept at Auberry and staffed with volunteers. The above, plus one dispatcher who works all year at the forestry service headquarters comprises the entire rural fire protection.

1-16-1949 A new campaign for the creation of a fire district to include all that part of Fresno County now without fire protection was mapped out by representatives of 8 organizations and agencies at a meeting yesterday at the courthouse. The district contemplated would cover the greater part of the county excluding only incorporated communities, the eight existing fire districts and the foothill & mountain areas for whose protection the state division of forestry and the United States Forest Service are responsible. State Forest Ranger Roy Bengard pointed out Fresno County is the only one in the San Joaquin Valley which does not have a county fire department. Although voters favored creation of a county district, 724 to 703 in an election conducted December 22, 1947, the board of supervisors declared the election void because due to an oversight, no provision had been made for a voting place for residents of Monroe school, west of Selma.

There are now two large and five small districts in operation but their territory is comparatively small. They are; North Central, Westside, Orange Cove, Riverdale, Laton, Del Rey, and Fig Garden Districts. Several others are inactive.

Mid Valley Fire District / Fresno County Fire Stations

Station Numbering changed in 1992 as a result of the county wide adoption of the passport accountability system.

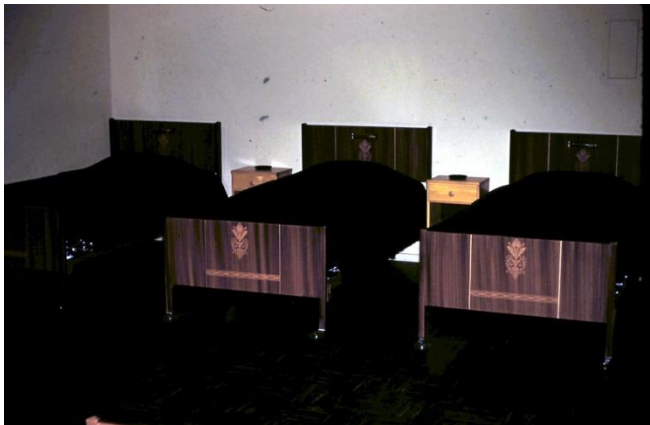
Reedley Station 1 / 81



City Hall / Fire Station early 1960s



Joint Station (Now Reedley FD)



Barracks Area and Kitchen in the Late 1960's

The first station to be located in Reedley was located behind the facility in the top left picture which was then the city hall for the city of Reedley. The station sat next to the alley in an old maintenance shed and consisted of two rooms and a bathroom which was located away from the shed adjacent to the old jail. The flooring for the station was made out of old raisin sweat boxes. This was around 1951. The station moved into the city hall building when the city built a new city hall. This remained the joint city and county station until the early 1970's when the building was deemed to be unsafe due to earthquake concerns. The fire district entered into a 15 year agreement with the city to build and share a new facility, pictured on the top right. At the end of the 15 year agreement, in 1993, the city exercised their option to have the fire district move out. This led to the elimination of Reedley as a fully staffed station and it became a volunteer (PCF) company. The PCF's occupied several locations prior to the complete dissolving of the company around 2008. During the time the city and the district occupied the old city hall station there was a procedure the fire district employees followed whenever the city had a call. First the city dispatcher would sound the city wide siren, located on the water tower just west of the station (very loud), then they would call the station on the "bat" phone and give us the location. That info was transferred onto a blackboard in the garage. The county engine would be moved around to the back of the station so the city could get their 2nd engine out. The district employees would then get out of the way so as not to be run over. After the city firefighters had all left, we would go around and shut off, move or otherwise secure their personal vehicles.

Fowler / Del Rey Station 2 / 82



The original Fowler station was located on the NE corner of Fowler and Floral Avenues around 1954. In 1957 the fire district moved into the City of Fowler Fire Station located in downtown Fowler. The personnel lived in an upstairs apartment across the hall from the police chief's residence. When not responding to calls they took care of radio dispatching for the police department. A retired employee who worked at the Fowler City facility related the following information about the procedures they had to follow when assisting the city,

Fowler Police dept. Great bunch of guys. MVFD was responsible for answering the police phone every night from 5 PM til 8 AM the next day and all hours on weekends. We took the calls and relayed them to the on duty patrolman. We could also monitor CHP traffic along with other major police services state wide. And there were always sat night fights at "Club Gus" next to the fire station! Oh yes, the chief lived in the adjoining apartment to ours and when we left on a call we had to switch the phone over so he could answer it.

Fowler Fire Dept. We answered the fire phone, got the location, rang a city siren which was mounted, I think, on the city hall building. One long for south of Golden State, Two long for north of Golden State (there was no 99 freeway then). We wrote the location on the down stairs blackboard, pulled our engine across the street, started their engine, a 1937 Chevy 500 GPM covered with dust, pulled it out to the sidewalk and waited for volunteers to show up. The first guy always hid behind the Ford Building so he wouldn't have to drive or operate the pump. Then we occasionally had to stop a rolling, unmanned vehicle because the driver had jumped out before it came to a stop!

That facility is shown in the left picture above along with one of district engines used at that time. In 1963 the fire district moved from the city to a location on Manning Ave. between Golden State Ave. and Highway 99 on the north side of Manning, next to Schwabenland Tractor Repair at 7372 E. Manning Ave. The building was an old farm house with 2 bedrooms, bathroom, kitchen, and living room with a fireplace. The fireplace was later found to be cracked and deemed unsafe to use. Station personnel constructed the apparatus shed shown on the right of the picture. The property was owned by Pete Schwabenland. The entire yard around the station was dirt and in order to keep the dust down many tons of pea gravel were brought in and spread around the front, along the driveway, and around the back. This kept the dust down but the movement of equipment over the gravel caused it to move which made it necessary to hand rake the yard on a regular basis to maintain full coverage. Manning Ave. was eventually widened to it's current width which eliminated much of the front area of the station as shown below, left, on the next page. The Manning Ave. Station had the distinction of being home to the only SCBA refill station in the district and that operation was moved to Del Rey when that station was opened. In addition, the care, maintenance, & issuing of all PPE (personal protective clothing) was handled at the Manning Ave. station. That operation was moved to Sanger when the Del Rey station opened.



Manning Ave Station



American Ave. Station

The Fire District decided to relocate the station in the 1980's and built the current facility pictured above on the right. It included the shop facility which was moved from South Fresno Station 7/87.

American Ave. apparatus repair facility (Shop)

The evolution of vehicle repair and maintenance has seen many changes since the establishment of both the Unit and the Fire Districts. In the early days these functions were carried out by the employees themselves or if it was beyond their abilities, the tasks were farmed out to commercial establishments.

State owned equipment was primarily maintained and repaired by either the station personnel or one of the Heavy Fire Equipment Operators (HFEO). Additionally, if this work was beyond their abilities, the apparatus might be taken into Region Office to be worked on by one of the early Fire Equipment Managers (FEM). Two of the early FEM's were Vern Duper & Lew Smith. Winter maintenance was performed in several different locations in the Unit. Eastside equipment was usually brought into Sanger Headquarters and equipment on the Westside was done at Coalinga. Occasionally, apparatus were taken to Miramonte for this task. All of the locations utilized both HFEO's and station personnel to complete the job. In later years, the facilities at Region Office were also utilized. Not all station personnel were assigned to this task as some were more mechanically inclined than others. With the opening of the current shop at Station 82 all repairs on State equipment was moved to that facility.

Repairs on fire district equipment in the early days were completed by station personnel or if assistance was required, they took the rigs into South Fresno station 7 (now 87) where station personnel from that station assisted. Personnel from Station 7 were usually placed there because of their mechanical abilities as they not only did repairs, but also did major modifications to convert old military fuel tankers into some of the early semi water tenders the fire district utilized. In the early 1960's the fire district employed their first full time mechanic to augment the work done by the station personnel. The first heavy equipment mechanic (HEM) hired around 1963 was Walt Sawtell. Unfortunately he died of a heart attack while working in the shop and was replaced by Vern Vines who worked until he retired in the mid 1970's. Some of those who followed him were; Rollie Bischel, Bill Farmer, who was the first Fire Equipment Manager (FEM) Albert Kong, Jeff Paddock, & currently Billy Greenwood. There were also HEM's hired who worked under the FEM as the use of station personnel was phased out in the mid 1970's. Among them were; John Schlegal, John Harshburger, Angelo Cunha, Ron Slebiss,

With the construction of the current repair facility in Del Rey, a more professional approach to the repair and maintenance was established. The shop is an authorized service facility for both Smeal and Spartan fire apparatus companies which enables them to do factory authorized repairs to both fire district equipment and adjoining fire department apparatus and they also have an agreement with the county to do repairs on Fresno county vehicles.

To accomplish this the shop employs a FEM, a staff service analyst, who serves as the office manager, an equipment and parts manager, 2 Schedule A mechanics (HEM), 1 Schedule B HEM, 1 HEM who works at both the shop and Miramonte Conservation Camp, and 2 Schedule A HFEO's. One of the HFEOs does mechanic work at the shop and the other serves as the facility maintenance manager for the fire district. They respond with the fire district transport / dozer when needed. The shop utilizes a total of 5 service rigs for in the field repairs and periodic maintenance. Additionally there is a transport trailer which is used to haul in apparatus not able to be driven in for repairs. The shop utilizes a fully equipped machine shop and fabrication shop in addition to the mechanic work done. Ninety percent of all repairs are now accomplished in house thanks to these facilities. A recent addition to the facility is a large parking garage which allows for the protection of the reserve fleet of engines and brush engines.



Original Station & Shop @ Station 7



After addition of 2 bays & Office & parts storage



Current shop and offices @ Station 82

American Ave. Shop (cont.)



Reserve fleet storage building



Misc. storage area

Selma / Conejo Station 3/83



Van Horn Station



Mountain View Station circa 1980



Barracks, kitchen, & day room of the Mountain View station 1980's

The original Selma / Conejo Station was located at Conejo & Peach Aves. around 1955 and remained there until 1957 when the station was moved to 14268 S. Van Horn Ave. and is shown in the photo above on the left. This was just west of Highway 99 & south of Mountain View Ave. The station remained there until around 1970 when the current facility was built on the north side of Mountain View Ave., east of Highway 99. (shown at right above).



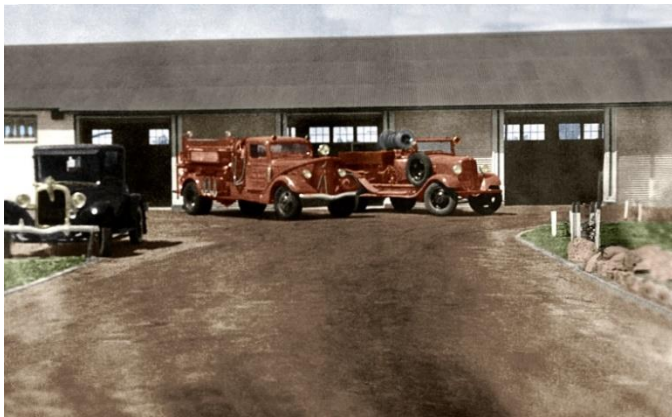
Station 83 as it appears today



Early 1960's water tender

Sanger Station 4/84 and Unit Headquarters

The original CDF headquarters for Fresno and Kings Counties was established at the Fresno Fairgrounds at the corner of Maple & Butler Avenues in the 1930's. It remained there until the Sanger Station was established in 1951 when the Unit headquarters was moved from the Fresno Fairgrounds to the current location @ 210 S. Academy Ave. just north of the City of Sanger. In those early days equipment was centrally located at the fair grounds and responded to fires throughout the county, usually with only 1 man. To check in they would find a telephone to call in and either get sent to another incident or told to return to the fair grounds. The pictures below show the office, garage & some of the equipment assigned to the station.



Station 4 / 84 cont.

The new headquarters facility consisted of two residences, an office building, a warehouse, apparatus garage and fire station building with a separate kitchen building. Around 1976 one of the residences was demolished and the current office building was constructed.



Apparatus building in the 1950's



Early aerial photo prior to 1977



Original headquarters office/ dispatch



New headquarters as shown in 1977



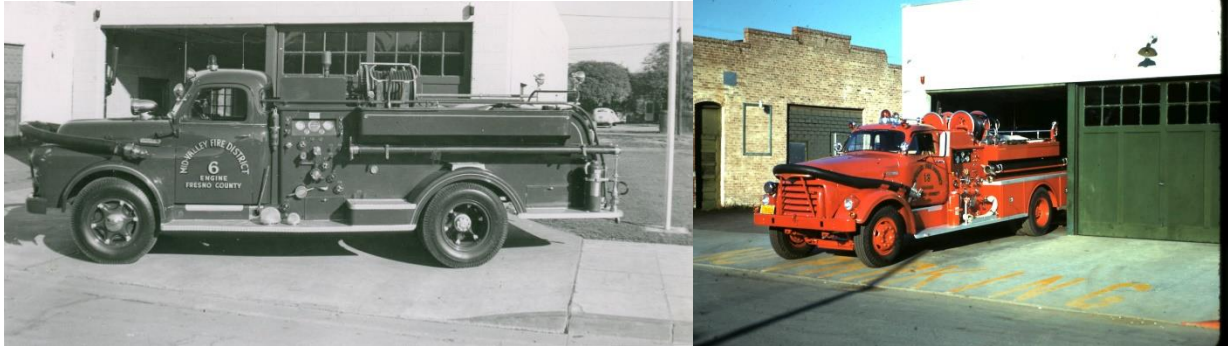
Unit Headquarters shown in 2004



Current apparatus

Clovis Station 5/85

From available information, Clovis station has been in 4 locations. In a newspaper article from 6-17-1952 we have found that the station was moved from Fresno Air Terminal (in the area of Clovis & Shields Aves.) to the City of Clovis. In another article dated 11-23-52 it states that the Clovis Fire Station was dedicated with city volunteers and fulltime county personnel. This station was located on Polasky Ave., just south of 5th St. the alley behind the current Clovis Appliance In 1966 the City hired full time firefighters and the fire district moved their operations to a house located in Tarpey Village at 4031 N Judy, (The picture below is how the house appears today). The Fire District received authorization in 1965 to build a new station and construction of the current station was completed in 1967 at the current site at Nees Ave. and Sunnyside Ave.



2 views of the Pollasky Ave. Station



Tarpey Station (house) as it appears today



1980's view of Station 5



Station 85 as it appears today

Central Fresno / Clovis Lakes Station 6/86

The first central Fresno station was located at the southeast corner of Gettysburg & First Streets and was staffed prior to 1955, the exact opening date is unknown. The station was moved to the "wood yard" located on Backer & Hedges Aves. around 1960 and was staffed until it closed around 1977. It was called the wood yard because it was situated in the area surrounded by lumber mills and lumber storage areas. The current Station 6/86 was opened in December of 1982 and became known as the Clovis Lakes Station.



Station 6, located in the "Wood Yard" located at Backer & Hedges Aves.



Clovis Lakes Station 86



Gettysburg & 1st street station

South Fresno Station 7/87

South Fresno station 7 opened at the current site in 1953 after being moved from the Fairgrounds station site which had been in operation since the early 1930's. The fire district repair facility was also established there and was staffed with on duty personnel.



First Station 7 with 3 apparatus bays



Station 7 after the addition of 2 bays & an office in 1967

The current station was built just to the north of the old station and was opened around 1974. The old station was then utilized as the fire district repair facility and the old living quarters was transformed into warehousing and parts storage. This remained as the "Shop" until the current facility in Del Rey was opened.



East Fresno Station 8/88

East Fresno station 8 was built in 1954 and was placed in service in 1955. It was located on Tulare Ave. west of Minnewawa Ave. It remained fully staffed until 1995 when it was closed as part of a transition agreement with the City of Fresno. For many years this was one of the busiest CDF stations in the state. It was home to one of the first paramedic units in the fire district. It was not unusual to respond to over 30 calls (fire & medical aid) during a 48 hour shift. In addition to responding to emergencies the on duty personnel were tasked with the responsibility of repairing & maintaining all fire hose in the district. This included keeping accurate records on every piece of hose in the district. Since there were only 2 apparatus bays in this station the medic unit responded out the back door of the bay on the right side of the pictures shown below. Barracks space was limited and sometimes when an entire shift was on, someone might have to sleep on the couch.



Station 8 early 1960's



Station 8 1969 with E-8 & WT-8



One shift for Medic 8, Eng. 8, Eng. 208.



Foreman Jack Price
Hose repair station, note stained & polished floor.



Medic 8, Engine 8 & Engine 208.

Easton Station 9/89

The first Easton Station opened around 1951. It was located on Jefferson Ave. just west of Washington Union High School. In 1958 the station was relocated to Elm Ave. across the street from the High School. This station remained open until 1967 when the current station was built on Cherry Ave.



Easton Station 1963 (Elm Ave.)



Apparatus bay, Date unknown



Station 9



Station 89

Caruthers Station 10/90

The First Caruthers station opened in 1947 in what now are the Fairgrounds offices. An additional apparatus garage was added later to house the water tender (tanker in those days). This remained in service until the current station was constructed in 1993.



Station 10 as it was originally.



Station 10 after the additional bay was added.



Station 10 in the 1970's



Current Caruthers Station 90

Riverdale Station 11/91

Riverdale station was opened in 1951 and was housed in the Riverdale City Fire Station. The Fire district moved out in [redacted] and left the station as a volunteer station. This was due to budget constraints and in 2004 the fire district volunteer company closed. The Riverdale Public Utilities District provides fire protection in Riverdale with Volunteers as Company 69.



Riverdale Station around 1980



Dodge engine early 1960's

San Joaquin Station 12 / 99

The San Joaquin Station opened in approximately 1953 and remained a staffed station until 1980 when the permanent personnel were moved to the Tranquility Station. The original station was located on Colorado Ave. & Main in the city of San Joaquin. It was remodeled to provide more living space for the crew. A volunteer facility was constructed in 1990 and remained in service until 1995. It is located on Railroad Ave. around the corner from the old station. This station was closed and reopened several times prior to its final closing.



Colorado Ave. Station



Railroad St. facility

Note. One person who was very active as a volunteer and later as a PCF at both the San Joaquin and the Tranquility Stations was Gary Lemon. Whenever you talk to someone about those stations, his name comes up. He was the backbone of the department there for many years and helped to train many PCF's as well as permanent employees. Dominguez Romero was the Chief prior to Gary Lemon.

Tranquility Station 13 / 95

The first tranquility Station opened in about 1947 and was located next to the high school tennis courts. The current station located at Morton & Colorado was opened around 1964-65. It received a remodel in 1980 to add additional facilities for the crew & for additional apparatus.



Original Tranquility Station



Current Tranquility Station

Mendota Station 14 / 96

Records indicated that the first Mendota station was established in 1943. It co-located with the City of Mendota Fire Dept. on 6th street across from the grammar school and remained there until the current station was completed in 1987. There is listed in the Redbook a West Mendota station from 1953 to 1960, but we have been unable to find any information except that it was located on the Hammond Ranch.



6th St. station across from the grammar school



Current station 96



Firebaugh Station 15

CDF Redbook indicates that the Firebaugh station came into being in 1950. According to Firebaugh Fire Chief John Borboa, it was located at what was referred to then as the government camp, in a two story metal building near the current intersections of Clyde Fanon & Allardt. In 1955 the City of Firebaugh opened their current facility and the Fire District moved in with them. The fire District shared the facility pictured below with the City of Firebaugh Fire & Police Departments until 1980 when the Fire District closed their operations in Firebaugh because of budget constraints and temporarily moved their operations to Brannon & Merrill, just south of Dos Palos. There was a small barracks for the district crew behind the apparatus bays. Part of the regular duties included dispatching the police department. The picture below on the bottom shows the opening of the facility in 1955. Pictured are Fire Chief Casey Borboa, the police chief, the city administrator and an unknown fire district employee.



Early 1960's



1955 station opening

Redfern / Panoche / Oasis Station Station 16 in LRA



Panoche station located at Russell & Nees
Which closed in 1968



Redfern Station located on the Hammond Ranch

Panoche / Oasis station has been assigned to several locations in north western Fresno County as well as to a facility which is listed in the 1940 Proposed Fire Protection Plan Preliminary Budget as being in San Benito county. Recollections from some older employees indicated that the name Oasis applied to the station when it was located in in the SRA and Panoche indicated local government responsibility (LRA). But this also is contradictory because a station established for several years in the 1980's and located at I-5 and Russell was called "Panoche" and it was a SRA Facility. A trailer house was hauled in from southern California at the beginning of fire season and set up to accommodate the crew and then returned to southern CA. at the end of fire season. This was done for several years and then funding for the station was cut and it closed.

A rough timeline for these facilities is as follows;

1928 to 1940 = Panoche Station, (SRA) exact location is unknown.

1940 to 1960 = "Oasis" station under SRA

1960 to approx. 1971 = "Panoche" station under LRA

Both facilities located @ Nees & Russell Ave.

1971 to 1993 = Moved to Redfern Station on the Hammond Ranch = LRA

1977 to 1980 = SRA "Panoche" station on Panoche road west of I-5 in a mobile home.

Note; there was also a Panoche Fire District but little information has been found on it.

North Fresno Station 20



Station 20 in the early 1960's



another view, note Herndon Ave as a 2 lane country road



1962 International 750 GPM pumper



1959 International 1500 gallon water tender

Station 20 opened around 1953 and was located on the north side of Herndon Ave. @ First Street in North Fresno. It closed around 1980/81 and the engine and personnel were moved to Clovis station 5 where it operated as Engine 205 until post Prop 13 budget constraints caused it to be taken out of service.

Note; There are references to a Pinedale Volunteer Fire Department, but little information has been found on it. One person who was active in this company was Everett George "Bud" Rank who was instrumental in the initial establishment of Mid Valley Fire District.

Fig Garden Station 21 / 80

Fig Garden Fire District was established in April of 1942 by a vote of the Fresno County Supervisors. They appointed 3 commissioners to oversee the oversight of the district. In July of 1942 the commissioners announced the appointment of Robert J. Zimmerman as the Chief with the selection of 15 volunteers and 2 full time firemen to be made in the near future. The district established a headquarters located on Wishon Ave. between Indianapolis & Gettysburg Aves. and made the purchase of a new fire truck. The district includes the Fig Garden Estates and the Forkner-Giffen Fig Gardens Subdivisions No. 1 & 2. The district operated as a separate entity until 1978 when they contracted with Mid Valley Fire District and became part of that district. They remained part of MVFD, Fresno County Fire, until January 1, 2006, when the contract was dropped and they instead contracted with the City of Fresno FD for fire protection.



Fig Garden Station as it appeared in the 1990's.

West Fresno Station ??

Very little information has been found on this station other than it was located on Neilson & Marks Aves. between 1951 & 1955 and may have been traded to North Central Fire District in a land trade.



West Fresno Station (note hedge pruned to show Mid Valley Fire, spelled out)

Westside Fire Protection District

On Friday, March 1, 1935, an article from the Fresno Bee / Republican states that the Fresno County Board of Supervisors agreed to request the state division of forestry to station another fire warden in the Coalinga, Kettleman, & Kreyenhagen districts of western Fresno County as a means of preventing serious grain and range fires during the dry season. It also cites the fact that currently there is only 1 man and 1 truck available to fight these fires, most likely at Coalinga. Was this the precursor to the Westside Fire District?

Oilfields Station 25

The first records for a station in Oilfields are found in the Red Book and start in 1943 and early sources have told us that it was a SRA station. The station was located at the intersection highways 198 & 33 and remained until the station was partially destroyed by the Coalinga earthquake of 1983. The station site was abandoned and the operation was moved to the current Harris Ranch Station after it was constructed.



Oilfields prior to the quake



Oilfields Station following the earthquake.

Harris Ranch Station 94

Harris Ranch Station was opened in 1984 on property adjacent to the Harris Ranch Hotel & Restaurant and remains in service today.



Huron Station 26 /93

Records indicate that the Huron Station was established in 1943. No other info has been found.



Pleasant Valley Station 24

Redbook records show that Pleasant Valley Station (PV) was established in 1950 and remained in service until 1992 when budget cuts forced it's closure. The facility was torn down and the property was later utilized to build the new Coalinga FFS.



Pleasant Valley circa 1970s



Mid 1960's



Two Early Westside Fire District engines

State Responsibility Area Stations

Fort Millerton / Millerton FFS

The first Fort Millerton station was established in a quanset hut down the hill from where the current station sits. Some records indicate this might have occurred around 1928 / 1930. The current station was built around 1954. The station was constructed of "Millerton Bricks" which were made adjacent to the site of the earlier station. These bricks were used for the construction of numerous CDF facilities thru-out the state. Brick production started in 1948 & ceased in 1960.



Part of the brick manufacturing process



Curing the brick following manufacture



First station in 1948



New station 1954



In the 1960.s



Current facility (garage constructed in 1994)

Hurley FFS

The 1 acre property for the Hurley FFS was obtained from Jerry Hurley who had been a county Fire Warden in 1948 and construction began immediately. The station remained original until the late 1990's when the kitchen was torn down and the current station built. One concern some of the old timers had was that the ghost which seemed to frequent the basement of the kitchen would become angered by the intrusion but stories of his antics seem to have stopped.



Hurley station



Kitchen



Current garage



Street view

Blasingame FFS & Camp

Records indicate that property for Blasingame Station was Leased in 1928 from Albert Blasingame and that a portion of the station was constructed in 1943. In 1950 a 20 man spike camp was established with wards from the California Youth Authority (CYA) facility in Coarsegold. This camp remained in service until approx. 1964 and then the facility reverted back to a fire station only. Improvements to the facility are on-going.

One point of information from the 1940 CDF preliminary budget cites the following for the station; Personnel = Assistant Ranger & a crew of 9, Equipment = Pickup & Truck, and Buildings needed = barracks & garage.

Blasingame Station



1955



1955 CYA Ward Barracks & messhall



1955 CDF Crew barracks & ASFR-1 office



Current

Shaver Lake Station

The first portion of the station to be built was the garage with living quarters located above and to the rear of the apparatus bays in the 1990's. This was followed in 1997 by the construction of the current station.



Garage with barracks above



Current facility

Piedra FFS

Piedra Station was established in the 1930's and according to a plaque salvaged from the first station it opened in 1939 after being constructed with aid from the Civilian Conservation Corps. (CCC) and the Works Project Administration (WPA). It is noted in the 1940 Proposed Fire Protection Plan Preliminary Budget the Station would consist of a crew of 9 along with a Pickup & Truck. The Plan further states that "this crew may not be unusually active in fire suppression, but it is centered in a highly inflammable area of slow travel". The old facility was replaced in 1980 by the current station as pictured below.



1950's



Current Piedra Station

Squaw Valley FFS

Squaw Valley Fire station was first established in 1928. As we understand, the first station was located across the creek to the south of the current site and consisted of tents. A memo dated Dec. 15, 1949 from Cecil Metcalf states the following: "The Squaw Valley Station at this present time consists of old buildings which were used in the C.C.C. program. The crew is using tents to sleep in and the mess hall is the C.C.C. buildings with the cooks sleeping quarters. Since this station is located on Highway 180, which is the main road into the Sequoia National Parks, the present station is no credit to the Division of Forestry." The next move, around 1950, was back across the creek where the old "Millerton Brick" station was built. It consisted of a barracks/mess-hall, gas house, garage, and residence for the district Ranger. This facility remained in service until the current buildings were built and opened in 2004. The 1940 Proposed Fire Protection Plan Preliminary Budget notes that buildings needed include a barracks and garage. It shows a staffing of an Assistant Ranger & crew of 9, with a pickup and truck. It further stated that the station is centered in an area of high fire frequency.

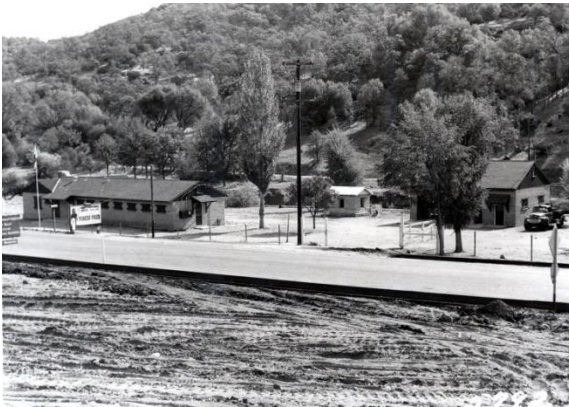


Photo from Nov. 1955



Early 1955



1969 and the creek flooding



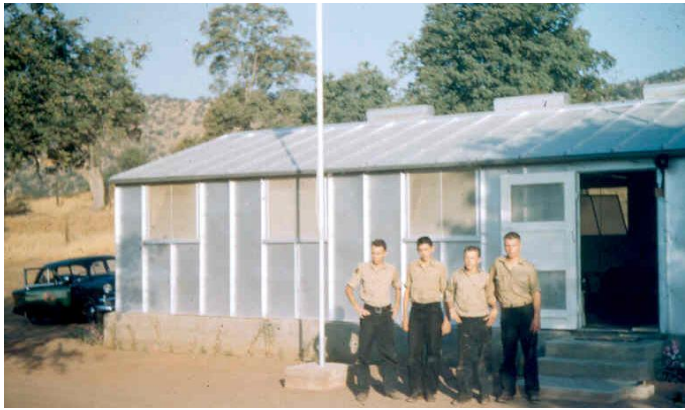
Current station



Street view of Squaw Valley Station

Sand Creek FFS

Sand Creek Station was established prior to 1940 with the exact date being unknown. It is listed in the 1940 Proposed Fire Protection Plan Preliminary Budget and it states that it needs a barracks and garage and was staffed with a crew of 9 operating from a pickup and truck. It also states that the crew will work in both Fresno & Tulare Counties. The original station site was on property leased from the Cecil Metcalf family and was located on his home property on Sand Creek Road. The station was moved across the street the next year and was made up of a tent placed on a newly poured cement slab. After several years at that location the station site was moved up the road to 41998 Sand Creek Road and remained there until the current station was built in 2006. This was also on Metcalf family property and was on a long term lease. It originally consisted of a quanset hut with a garage attached. A separate garage building was eventually added in the 1990's. This site reverted back to the Metcalf's following construction of the current station.



1949 – Prior to addition of the 1st garage



1st garage and some other improvements



Garage, Office and shop at the old site



Current Sand Creek Station

Coalinga FFS

Coalinga Station was established in the 1930's on property owned by Standard Oil Company on the south side of the City of Coalinga along Highway 198. The 1940 Proposed Fire Protection Plan Preliminary Budget calls for the construction of a residence, office, warehouse, large barracks, and garage. It calls for a crew of 13 along with an Assistant Ranger and a pickup and 2 trucks. A permanent station site was built in the 1950's. In 1954 an additional large barracks was constructed to accommodate a 30 man crew from Mountain Home camp who spent the winters in Coalinga and the summers in high country on the Mountain Home State Forest. This site was eventually closed in 2000 and a new facility was constructed in 2001 on the site of the former Westside FPD Pleasant Valley Station property where it is today.

The 1940 Proposed Fire Protection Plan Preliminary Budget has a remarks section concerning fire protection in Fresno County and states the following. "Administration in Fresno County has been a point of controversy for years because of the great distance across the valley. However, it is considered most feasible to administer the western hills from the City of Fresno. It is also difficult to establish the relative responsibility of the State for protection of the western hills because of the low watershed value. However, it is proposed that a large crew at Coalinga will fulfill any State obligation for fire protection in that area. The City of Fresno is the logical administrative and reserve base for the entire county".



1955



inmate barracks construction 1954



Coalinga Equipment, late 70's, early 80's



Street view of current Coalinga Station.

Cottonwood FFS

From interviews completed with retired employees we have determined that originally crews which would eventually staff Cottonwood Station were housed in Reef City near highways 41 & 33 and would drive to the future station site. Once there, they would hook into the established phone line and wait to either report a fire to headquarters or to receive assignments. The site overlooked Sun Valley. The station / lookout was constructed in the early 1940' and remained a staffed station until 1986. Another staffing option used for Cottonwood was for the crew to be stationed at Coalinga and each day drive to Cottonwood for the day, returning that evening and then doing the same thing the next day. Cottonwood was the only CDF schedule B station in Kings County.



Cottonwood 1952 looking West



Date unknown

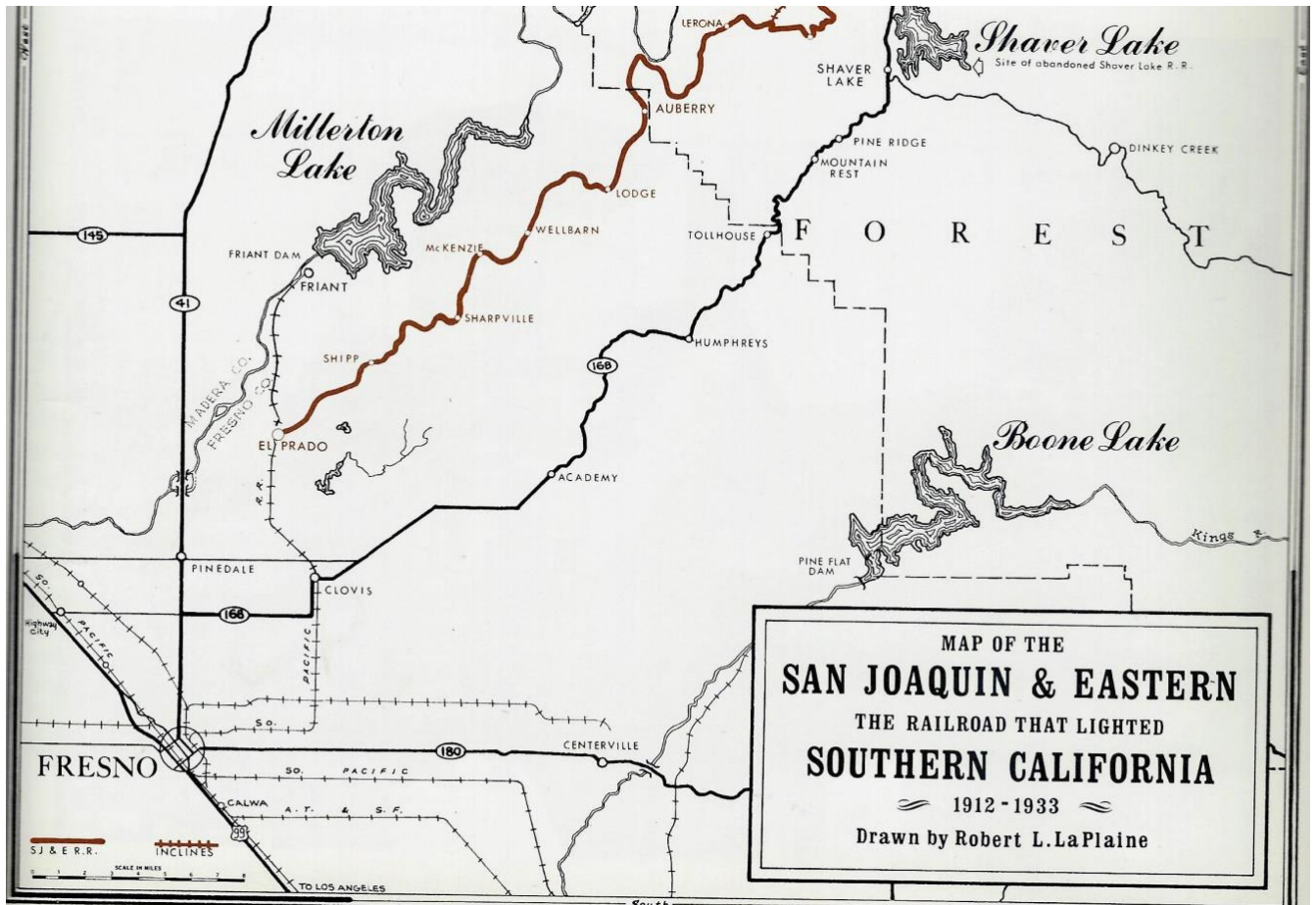
Murietta FFS

Murietta Station was located just west of the Murietta Conservation Camp in Los Gatos Canyon. The station was opened in the mid 1940's and was closed in 1968.



McKenzie Fire Camp

The camp was one of the very first established in Fresno County and was located on what is now private property controlled by a conservancy. It was opened between 1931 & 1933 and was located along the old SJ&E railroad lines in the SE ¼ of the SW ¼ of Section 7, TWP 11S, Range 22E BM MD. It remained in service until 1948 when the Hurley Station was established. No photos have been found of the camp. A map taken from the Book "The Railroad That Lighted Southern California" shows the location of the station.



Note the location just South of Millerton Lake and between Sharpville & Wellbarn along the red line.

Conservation Camps

A brief overview

In 1931 California employees supervised the emergency work Division of Forestry program for unemployed men at 28 work camps. The program terminated in 1933 with the advent of the CCC (civilian conservation corps.) program. Wards and inmates had been assigned to work details outside the confines of the institutions on a limited scale for many years. The successful use of great numbers of these men in suppressing forest fires throughout the State during the war years of 1942, 1943, and 1944, when other sources of manpower were not available, prompted leaders of the day from these two widely separated functions - Forestry with responsibilities for the conservation of natural resources and Youth Authority and Corrections with responsibilities for the rehabilitation and conservation of human resources - to get together with their problems to form the present conservation camp program.

The "camp" program underwent many important changes during the year ending December 31, 1959. The title "Honor Camps" was replaced with the more appropriate "Conservation Camps". The change is in recognition of the primary function of the camps, to deal with the conservation and development of both natural and human resources.

Three main camps and 3 "spike" camps are operated with the Department of the Youth Authority. The 1594 inmates and 265 wards, a total of 1859 men, are assigned to the following camps which were in operation on December 31, 1959 in Fresno County.

Name	Location	County	Date opened	Population
Miramonte	Miramonte	Fresno	9-15-49	84
Coalinga (Winter)	Coalinga	Fresno	3-9-54	30
Los Gatos Cyn.	Coalinga	Fresno	12-1-59	104
Blasingame Spike	Blasingame	Fresno	11-50	20

L. T. Petersen was appointed Deputy State Forester on the staff of the State Forester in 1949 to direct and coordinate the Forestry functions in the expansion of the program. Immediately plans were developed for the construction of a "standard" 60 man camp. Sites were located, materials were purchased, men were moved into temporary quarters at or near the sites, and construction got underway on camps at **Parlin Fork, Miramonte, Oak Glen, Slack Canyon, Magalia and Iron Mine**, all of which opened in 1949. These six camps were unique in that, unlike the earlier camps, they were designed specifically for this purpose, on selected sites and constructed by inmates and Forestry personnel including carpenters and construction specialists..

One camp was built in 1950, **Blasingame**, a permanent 20 man spike camp out of **Coarsegold 1959 Murietta** was established in an old camp formerly operated as a Fresno County "road camp".

Miramonte, Iron Mine, High Rock and Morena; each of these "1949" camps was expanded in 1960 to accommodate their present capacity of 80.

Owens Valley Camp = In the pamphlet titled "Ten Years in the Owens Valley 1955 – 65" written by D. E. Knowlton, Deputy State Forester, State of California, The Resources Agency, Department of Conservation, Division of Forestry, District IV. It explains the early years of trying to establish organized fire protection in the Inyo-Mono counties of California and outlines the process it went through to establish Owens Valley Camp. Those early days, 1955 to 1965 were under the direction of personnel from Fresno Kings & Tulare Ranger units. The camp was opened in 1963 and remained under the supervision of Region IV until 1970 when it was transferred to The Southern California District.

Miramonte Camp

As stated on the previous page, Miramonte Camp opened on its current site in 1949 as a 60 man camp. It was expanded in 1960 to accommodate the current capacity of 80 men. At one time the camp contained the following "in camp" projects; class "A" auto repair shop, Body & fender repair and paint shop, & a wood shop. Of the original 6 CDC camps opened in 1948, Miramonte is the oldest existing camp still in service.



Aerial view of the camp, no date



Wood shop



Paint booth & body shop



1948 Inmate housing



Staff barracks & offices 1948

Murietta / Los Gatos Canyon Camp

Murietta was established in 1959 on the site of an old County of Fresno road camp and remained in service until 1968 when then Governor Ronald Reagan's administration mandated a 10% budget reduction, causing the camp to close. All pictures below were taken in 1961.



Dining Hall



The Barracks



CDF Offices



Staff Barracks



Recreation Hall



Shop & Warehouse

Blasingame Spike Camp.

Blasingame spike camp was built in 1950 and served as a "spike" camp for 20 wards from the CYA (California Youth Authority) camp in Coarsegold. The camp closed in 1964. The Barracks was built adjacent to the Blasingame FFS and in later years has been utilized by station personnel as their barracks & mess hall. There have been several remodels of the station since the CYA moved out.



"Ward" barracks shown at right.

Coalinga Camp

Coalinga Camp was established in 1954 when 30 inmates from Mountain Home Camp were moved for the winter to Coalinga FFS. A separate barracks and larger dining hall were constructed to handle this move. The "winter" camp was closed in ? .



1954 construction of the inmate barracks and dining hall

Fresno Air Attack Base

In 1955 the Fresno Air Attack Base was added to the Unit, operating from the Fresno airport terminal at Chandler Field. The earliest air operations were fire patrol planes that flew out of Fresno (Chandler) and Coalinga airports. In 1960 the air program was moved to Hammer Field, which was a World War II Army Air Corps facility and now is the Fresno Yosemite International Airport. In 1994 the Fresno Air Attack Base and the Emergency Command Center were completely remodeled and co-located at the Fresno Yosemite Airport. CalFire ceased air operations in Fresno in 2012.



Fresno Air Attack offices prior to 1995



Old Batch plant and offices in the background



1995 Fresno Air Attack Base



OV-10 Bronco AA-430



Old Air Base sign



Loading area 1974

Sanger Helitack

In 1969 to 1971, the California Division of Forestry began a pilot program to test the feasibility for the use of helicopters and Helitack crews for wildland firefighting operations. Those early tests paved the way for the current Helitack program. Two locations were chosen to implement this program. One was located in Northern California at Boggs Mountain, Lake Napa Sonoma Ranger Unit and the other was established at Sanger Headquarters, Fresno Kings Ranger Unit.

Sanger was chosen because of its close proximity to main North and South travel routes, thus reducing travel time for the supporting service unit.

At Sanger a heliport was constructed and a mobile office trailer was moved in to house the helicopter operations. Initially, in 1969, a Hiller 1100 helicopter was utilized followed in 1971 by a Bell 206 Jet Ranger, both under contract from Rogers Helicopters, a local company. The crews were picked and were led by Fire Captains Ken Eller and Del Brandt, FAE's Lee Delap and Jerry Carder. Additionally FF's Gary Hampy, Mel Ruby, Gary Vessels, Doyle Seher and Rick Perkins were picked to participate in the program. The pilots were the two brothers who owned Rogers Helicopters, Harry and Dick Rogers.

Objectives of the program were established and included the following:

- Help meet the needs of initial attack in the area of the unit's home bases.

- Provide rapid reinforcement in the Units' area of first response.

- Be available for assignment to extend large fire action where the situation demands the capability of the Helitack crew.

- Be used as much as possible in conjunction with other elements of the fire control system so as exploit to the maximum the diversity and capability of all other presently used fire control tools and units.

The Sanger unit remained in service during the 1969, 1970, and 1971 fire seasons and was utilized on many incidents and compiled useful data for the evaluation of the program. The pilot program ended in 1971 and as a result the Department determined that helicopters were indeed a very useful and valuable firefighting tool. It was also determined that the Sanger copter should be relocated from Sanger to Columbia Air Attack Base, in the Toulumne Calaveras Unit. The copter operations along with the service unit and all associated tools and equipment were transferred to Columbia and the assigned personnel were, for the most part, returned to other assignments in the Fresno Kings Unit.



Helitack trailer & pad



Sanger's first copter

Sanger Helitack con't



Bell jet ranger



Sanger service unit 4395



Practicing the heli-jump



1949 very early helicopter training in region 4

Fresno Kings Unit Lookouts

Bear Mountain

The following information on Bear Mountain was found on the internet site known as californialookouts.weebly.com/fresno-county.html.

April 2, 1923: "A group of residents of the three fire districts, Sand Creek, Clark's Valley and Piedra, arrived in Fresno to appear before the board of supervisors this afternoon with a petition asking the board to establish a lookout station on Bear Mountain this summer.

George E. Smith of Orange Cove, chairman of the committee to appear before the board, said the plan to establish the station had met with approval of the Squaw Valley Farm Center and the Sanger, Reedly and Orange Cove Centers.

"It would afford greater protection for the three districts which are patrolled by Wardens, one for each of the districts," Smith said.

"Our plan is to have the board appoint only two wardens this year for patrol duty, making the third man the lookout warden."

Smith said the farm centers had figured out the cost of establishing the lookout station, telephone installation and other incidentals, and had concluded for the added protection it would afford from fires, that the station should be built.

Its location would be about two miles north of the Squaw Valley store, Smith said. Those with Smith to appear before the board this afternoon are Oren Kincaid and O.M. Burk of Squaw Valley, Clyde and Ray Johnson of Piedra and W.P. Bullard of Dunlap." (Fresno Bee)

April 27, 1923: "Fresno County and the settlers in the vicinity of Squaw Valley and Dunlap have planned to establish a fire lookout station on Bear Mt. It will cover considerable of the Trimmer and Dunlap country inside the Forest. We will have direct telephone connection with the station. The settlers are to build three miles of telephone line and a cabin on the mountain, and Fresno County is to pay the lookout. We are cooperating to the extent of 3 miles of #12 telephone wire, fixing up their map, and will give their organization reports from out lookouts." (California District News Letter)

May 28, 1923: "Five volunteer crews worked yesterday and today on the Bear Mountain fire lookout station and telephone lines and by nightfall an added protection from fire was given to that wide territory that is visible from the mountain top.

While one crew worked away at the mountain tower, others were busy on the telephone lines as follows: One at the Fulgham ranch to Dunlap and others between the ranch and Squaw Valley store. There will be two telephone lines--one will connect the tower with the Squaw Valley store and the other by way of the Fulgham ranch, will run to Dunlap.

The plans for the lookout station were formulated by the Squaw Valley Farm Bureau Center, which with other organizations agreed to build the telephone lines and tower if the supervisors would employ a lookout. For this position the board secured E.M. Hugh of Squaw Valley.

In addition to the lookout, there will be two fire patrolmen, Ray Bullard of Dunlap, who will also act as traffic officer on the Squaw Valley-Dunlap road, and C.E. Metcalf, who will patrol along the Sand Creek road.

The committee in charge of the volunteer workers is composed of George Smith, Jack Kincaid and William Bullard.

The board of supervisors has ordered a pair of high powered field glasses for the lookout and has provided a flag that will fly over the station." (Fresno Bee)

May 1925: "The county board of supervisors was unable to interest anyone in the \$100 a month job as fire lookout on Bear Mountain." From the Fresno Yesterdays column, 40 years ago published in the May 27, 1965 issue. (The Fresno Bee The Republican)

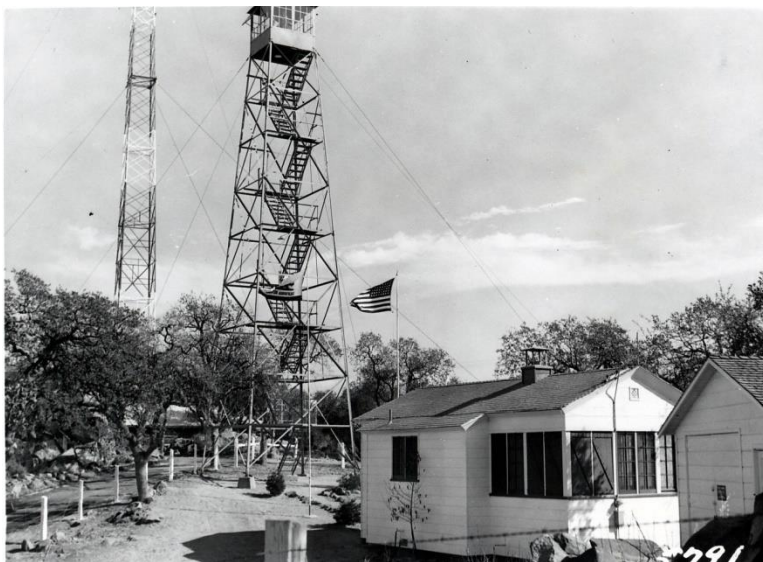
July 23, 1925: "The lookout station at Bear mountain was blown down, and Ranger and Mrs. Roy Rudy made their way to Squaw Valley, bringing news of fires." (Plumas Independent)

March 18, 1927: "Arrangements for construction of a 60-foot steel tower at the Bear Mountain fire lookout station on the north side of the road through Squaw Valley, thirty-five miles east of Fresno, have been completed, according to word received here today from M.B. Pratt, state forester. After the tower has been completed the state will appoint a lookout. Similar towers are contemplated for heavily wooded sections in other parts of the state under co-operative contracts with private or county interests, to aid fire fighters during the coming season." (Fresno Bee)

October 28, 1927: "Approval of the department of finance of an all-year co-operative forest fire agreement with Fresno county was announced by W.B. Rider, deputy state forester. Under the agreement the state will maintain a ranger in Fresno county all year and also will maintain a lookout on Bear Mountain during the summer." (Bakersfield Californian)

October 29, 1964: "Lightning struck the Bear Mountain lookout of the state division of forestry, knocking out telephone lines and the station's radio transmitter." (The Fresno Bee The Republican)

With the advent of more residents in the area Bear Mountain lookout closed in the late 1980's.



Bear Mountain residence & tower



1955 Bear Mountain Tower

Black Mountain Lookout

The following information on Black Mountain was found on the internet site known as californialookouts.weebly.com/fresno-county.html.

December 28, 1933: "A federal fire lookout station is to be placed at Camp Clan on the top of Black Mountain here. A road will be built to the site. The first load of grade stakes for the road are on the ground. The survey is being started across the Black Mountain Sanctuary." (The Fresno Bee The Republican)

May 13, 1935: "Three new fire lookout stations, completed by the Civilian Conservation Corps last summer, will go in use this season. These are at Black Mountain, south of Auberry, where both state and forest services will watch for fires in their respective areas." (The Fresno Bee The Republican)

November 27, 1952: "Deputy State Forester C. E. Metcalf took a long look at a form sent here from Sacramento for his signature, and then decided to send it back without signing it.

He said he thought things were getting out of hand when the division wanted to enter into a contract with the federal government to 'maintain a forest fire' at Black Mountain in the Sierra National Forest.

Metcalf blamed a typographical error for the oddity, explaining the state is going to operate a lookout at the Black Mountain and that somebody just dropped the word 'lookout' from the form." (The Fresno Bee The Republican)

19??: A two story prefabricated cab, observation room over the living quarters was erected on 20-foot steel tower.

As with Bear Mountain, the influx of residences surrounding Black Mountain led to its' closure in the late 1980's.



Black Mountain in the 1950's



Black Mountain as photographed in 2011

Copper Peak

Copper Peak lookout was established in the 1930's and remained in service until 1979 /80 when the encroachment of residences made its continued use unnecessary. It was vandalized several times after it was closed and was eventually destroyed by arson in 1985.



Copper Peak in the 1950's



1985 remains of Copper Peak

Dispatch / ECC

The following pictures depict the changes in dispatch technology over the years. The dispatch function was first located in what is now the fire prevention offices at Sanger, which at that time were the main offices of the Unit. Picture #1 shows the first console which was located where the current fire prevention reception area is now. Pictures #2 & 3 show the next dispatch area which was located where the prevention conference room is now. This area was utilized until the new office building was constructed. Picture 4 shows the ECC located in what is now the conference room at Sanger. Pictures 5 & 6 show the current ECC at the airbase.



#1 Charles Rothgarn 1st dispatcher ?1953?



#2 Wayne King & Bob Keepers 1955



#3 Last ECC in the current Prevention building



#4 ECC in the current conference room @ Sanger 1980's



#5

Current ECC circa 1995



#6



Street view of the current ECC

Mid Valley Regional Fire Training Center

Prior to the completion of the training center, neither the Ranger Unit nor the Fire District had a dedicated facility in which to conduct training. Many different sites were used to conduct training. Some of those are listed below:

- Fire stations such as Millerton & Blasingame on the Eastside & Coalinga on the Westside.
- The Old Forester's hall, which was a building constructed during WW-2 as a recreation / messhall for the Army training facility located near the intersections of Butler & Maple Aves. This building is still standing today and is being used by the Inglesia Christana Eben-ezer Church.
- A facility called the Sierra Training Center, which was a joint facility between CDF & the USFS. It was located at Fresno Yosemite Airport where Rogers Helicopters are currently located.
- The Fresno fairgrounds was frequently utilized for outside classes on hose lays, Ladder & rope training, etc.
- After construction of the current Station 87, the conference room was also utilized.
- During the 1990's, an agreement between the Clovis Veterans Hall & the Unit was established and many classes and meetings were held there, without financial charge to the Unit.
- Fresno City College also allowed use of their classrooms at the John Eules Ballpark in Fresno.

During the 1990's Fresno City College began offering local fire departments an opportunity to register their employees for college credits by enrolling them as students of the college during regular department drills and classes. In return for enrolling the employees, the fire departments would receive a percentage of the full time equivalency (FTE) monies the college received from the state. The training bureau staff at that time went to Chief Batchelor and requested that the monies being brought in from the college be placed in a dedicated fund for the future construction of a small training facility. Chief Batchelor told them that he would be in favor of that and he would also support having the fire district match those funds, with the approval of the fire district board. A staff report was prepared by the bureau staff and presented to the board and they approved the idea. With this funding source in place the bureau staff consisting of Captains Gary Karle, Larry Riggs, Mark Watkins, Chris Kings and Battalion Chief John Krum started looking into ideas for a training facility. They realized that it would be several years before adequate funding was available to proceed so a preliminary concept was drawn up for a classroom, small drill tower and a confined space training ground to be located at the Del Rey station on the existing station site. This was a three phase project, with the classroom as phase one, the confined space area as phase two, and the tower as phase three. Formal plans were prepared and submitted to the county for approval, noting the time frames for the phases. These plans were approved by the county and bureau staff started looking at classroom modules. This was as far as it got for several years due to a turnover in the bureau staff due to retirements and transfers around 2001. The plans and concepts were held inactive until 2008 when then Unit Chief Keith Larkin began exploring the idea of a training center for the fire district. He established a training center committee to look at the options for a training center. One option explored was an offer from the County Board of Supervisors of land in the Selma area where they were looking at building an agricultural center. Another option looked at was property located on the Juvenile Justice Center. A third option of purchasing the Malaga Elementary School at Central & Golden St. Avenues was discussed with the School District & DDG. These ideas were eventually dropped because of the delays encountered with the County. At that point the original idea of placing the training center at Station 82 was rejuvenated and the services of the architect who was then doing station design work for the fire district were obtained. A tour of the site was completed and some concept drawings were done. It was felt that the site would not be large enough without the acquisition of some additional property. Battalion Chief Chris King was given the task of contacting the adjacent property owners to see if any of them would be willing to sell some property to the fire district. The owner to the East declined but the family which owned the land to the North and West of the site were willing to sell.

Initially the thought was to purchase three acres to the North of the station but it was then decided that was not going to be enough area so BC King went back to the family and it was eventually agreed that the district would purchase both the property to the North and the West which totaled around 12 acres. The fire district board authorized the purchase and planning was started for the training center. There were the usual delays but eventually construction began on the site and it was opened in August of 2016.

Today the training center operates a facility staffed with (1) Battalion Chief, (2) Fire Captains, & (1) Administrative Assistant. Additional personnel are assigned to the Training Bureau utilizing Cadres and Working Groups to support curriculum development, course delivery, and technical assistance throughout the year.

The site consists of the following:

Administration Building – 1,440 square feet

Classroom 1 – 1,440 square feet, seating for 45 students

Classroom 2 – 960 square feet, seating for 35 students

Bathroom Building – 224 square feet, male and female

Burn Tower – 4 stories

Pump House – 1000 GPM support 5 internal hydrants

Attic Fire Propane Prop

Couch Propane Prop

Flashover Gas Prop

CSFM certified Confined Space Prop

Several vertical ventilation props, ground & tower mounted

Vehicle Extrication

Firefighter Survival Maze

High Angle Rescue capabilities

Driver Course

The facility sponsors courses in Incident Command System and specialized training in accordance with CAL FIRE, National Wildfire Coordinating Group (NWCG) and California State Fire Training curriculum throughout the calendar year.



Confined Space Training props.



Aerial view of the training center



Drill Tower



Classrooms, Offices on the right Back of the shop facility on the left



Assembly area



Roof Ventilation prop

Volunteer / PCF Stations

Parlier = Information obtained from the Red Book indicates fire reports were received from Parlier Station from 1948 to 1954 indicating it was a staffed station at some point? The original station was located next to the old city hall on Tulare Street. A new station was constructed in 1994 on Parlier Ave. to better service both Parlier & West Parlier. It was known as Station 1, then 41 & finally 71.



1964 D J Herring in white (Parlier Fire Chief)
Bob Bondurant, Mike Rico, & Dan Suderman
Form Reedley Station which oversaw the Parlier
Volunteers.



1970's Garage addition was done in late 1960's



Current Parlier Station Dedication

Del Rey Station Del Rey station was located on the north side of Portola Ave. between Morro & Pismo Avenues. It was originally a municipal volunteer company and later became a volunteer station administered by Mid Valley Fire District thru the 60's, 70's and into the 80's. It was eventually taken out of service due to a lack of available personnel in the mid 1980's. The station was modified in the 1970's to accommodate taller apparatus. The building was jacked up all around and 3 rows of block-lite bricks were placed under the walls to raise the entire structure.



Engine 22



Engine 40



Del Rey Fire District Engine, Date unknown

Friant Volunteers = One early recollection of the Friant Volunteer Station was that it was located across the street from the old Millerton Inn and consisted of a wood frame, metal siding building. The engine was an open cab with wooden ladders. The crew from Millerton FFS was tasked with the responsibility of checking out the engine periodically and usually found it with a dead battery. In 1965 there were only 3 or 4 active volunteers to staff the engine.

Pinedale Volunteers = The only information we have been able to find is from a retired Station 20 employee who remembers the volunteer captain as being Chet Nelson and one of the other volunteers was Bud Rank who was one of the main proponents in the establishment of Mid Valley Fire District.

O'Neill Volunteers = located in the area of the current Westside Elementary School on Excelsior Ave. west of Five Points. Dates of service & other info are unknown.

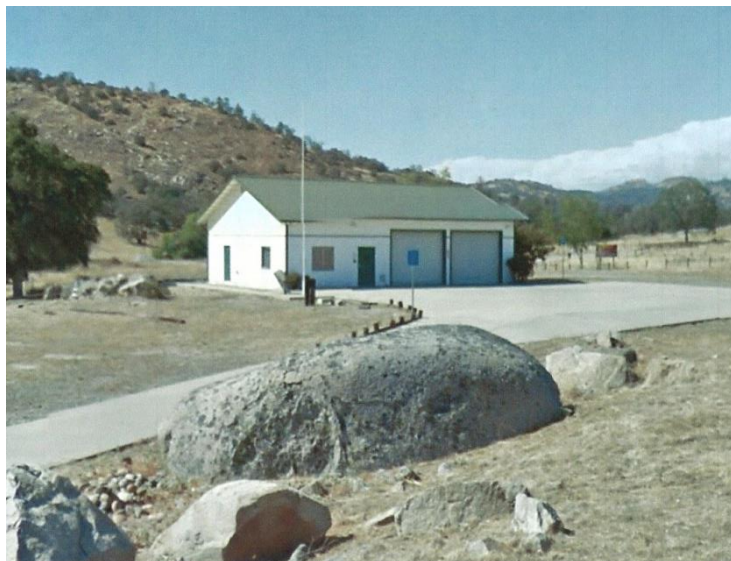


Wonder Valley Volunteer Company 77= The Wonder Valley Volunteers were at first a group of employees from the "Dude" ranch who operated a retired MVFD water tender and engine. Some basic training was given to them by the Piedra crew. After a near catastrophic fire involving a 2500 gallon propane tank, the need for more formal organization & training was realized. More training was received from both the Piedra Crew and the FKU Training Bureau and in 1997 Station 77 was built and the current PCF company came into existence.



Morgan Canyon Volunteers, Station 74

Station 74 serves the foothill area of eastern Fresno County in and around Prather and Morgan Canyon. The station was built in 1990 and dedicated in 1991. Prior to the construction of this station the apparatus was stored on the private property of some of the volunteers, including Richard Fronk & Louie Cohizer.



Tollhouse Volunteers, Station 75

Station 75 serves the area of eastern Fresno County in and around the community of Tollhouse. The station was built in 1990.



Cantua Creek / Three Rocks volunteers, Station 98

Located at 29595 W. Hidalgo in Cantua Creek. The station was built in the 1980's as a community service facility. The Fire District shared space with the Fresno County Sheriff's Office and several local organizations. The PCF company was disbanded in 1995 and the facility is now home to the Cantua Creek Child Development Center.



Three Rocks Vol. = Located on Derrick (Hwy. 33) and Clarkson. ? Seasonal grain Patrol?



Red Book Stations

While reviewing old Red Books listed on the department website we found the following stations listed in Fresno County and are we attempting to do more research on them.

Hoag Ranch = 1949, possibly in the Firebaugh area.

Levis = 1943 to 1946, location unknown

Akers = 1943, located in Los Gatos Canyon across from the county park. The 1940 preliminary CDF budget cites the following information on this station. It is listed under the San Benito County section and shows a crew of 9 with a pickup & truck and it will need a Garage & Barracks. It also states, "This crew is to be located near the boundary of Fresno & San Benito Counties for action in both counties. The crew may work about N New Idria or almost south to Coalinga. For present the crew can construct necessary phone lines to the point accepted as the final crew base, thus being in communication with the fire dispatcher throughout the summer".

Mt. Whitney = 1955 to 1960, possibly the Five Points Volunteers?

Helm = 1951 to 1953, ????

Shown on the following page is a table depicting the stations listed in the Redbooks with the available dates shown when fire information was received from those stations. All information was obtained from the CalFire website / Redbook section.

Station	Dates	Station	Dates
Akers	1943	Oilfields	43-83
Blasingame	43-now	Panoche	66- 81
Caruthers	47-now	Parlier	48-54
Central Fresno	60-77	Piedra	43- now
Clovis	51-now	Pinedale	59-69
Coalinga	43-now	Pleasant Vly.	50-86#
Conejo	55-60	Reedley	51-93
East Fresno	59-93	Riverdale	51- 86#
Easton	51-now	Sand Creek	43 / 47-now
Fig Garden	43-46 & 78-2006	Sanger	50-now
Firebaugh	50-84	San Joaquin	53-86#
Fowler / Del Rey	54-now	Selma	50-now
Fresno	43-53	S. Fresno	53-now
Helm	51-53	Squaw Vly	43-now
Hoag Ranch	49	Tranquility	47-now
Hurley	48-now	West Mendota	53-60
Huron	43-now	West Fresno	51-55
Levis	43-46		
McKenzie	43-47		
Joaquin Murrietta	45-69		
Mendota	43-now		
Millerton, Ft.	45- now		
Mt. Whitney	55-60		
N. Fresno	53-81		
Oasis	45-55?		
Oasis Patrol	?59-66		

= 1986 is the last year individual station stats were reported in the redbook

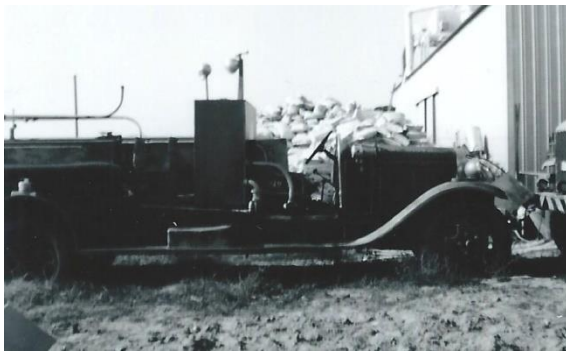
Shown below and on the following pages are some of the early apparatus utilized in the Fire districts of the Fresno Kings Unit.



Fairgrounds equipment



1950's



OLD #7



Military surplus engine



Military surplus tanker



E-10 early 1950's White 750 gpm



1955 era Tanker



1974 Ford with a rebuilt fuel taker trailer



Late 1950's to early 1960's



1968 CO-8190



1970's era Fords 5 man cab



3 man cab



Westside FPD Tanker & Engine early 1960s / late 50's



1962 International 750 gpm



1988 Weststates Fire equipment purchase



5 engine purchase 1990's



Ford engine late 1960;s / early 1970's



1958 international 1500 gallon Tanker



Early 1960's Dodge



1963 Chevrolet staff vehicles



Medic Van



Plymouth staff Vehicle



Dodge staff Car



GMC mid 1950s Staff vehicle

Pictured on the following pages are some of the early Schedule "B" Fresno Kings apparatus.



1949 Millerton engine



1949 GMC at Piedra Station



1952 Marmon-Harrington Ford with brush bars



Engine 4375 1956 Ford



Engine 4366 Model 5



Engine 4360 @ Piedra



Engines 4375 and 4383 at Millerton Station



Model 4 circa 1975



Model 1, Engine 4378



Model 9, Engine 4383



Model 8, Engine 4381



Dodge Power-wagon Mobile foreman's vehicle



Sanger Dozer, transport & pilot vehicle



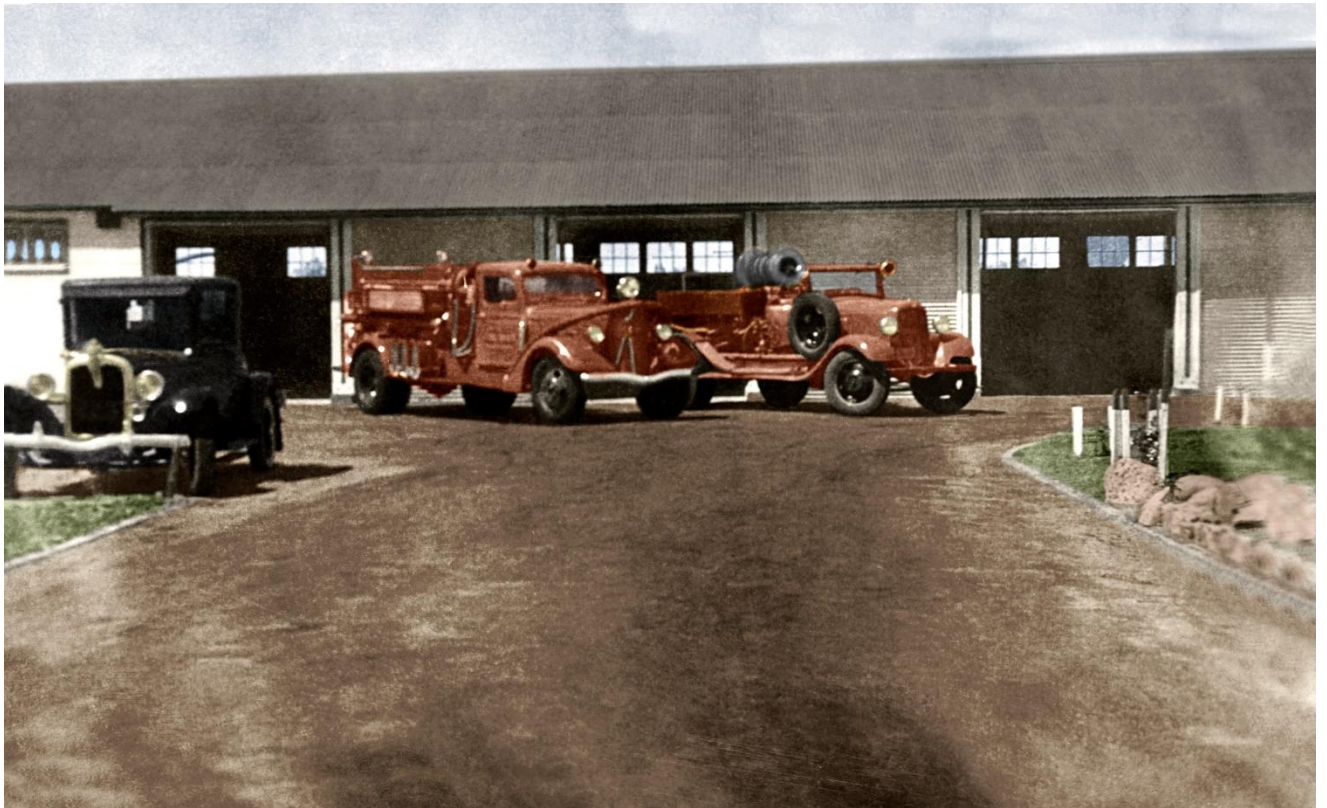
Engine 4361 Model 4



Coalinga dozer & Transport 1959



Coalinga Station apparatus compliment 1980's



Fairgrounds station equipment 1930's?