

# ONLY WOMAN FOREST FIRE LOOKOUT IN THE UNITED STATES

By ROBERT H. MOULTON

**A**LONE, 6,444 feet above sea level, on top of Klamath peak in Siskiyou county, California, a young woman for months at a time during the prevalence of the forest fire season last year, did her part, and did it well, in the effort the government is making to preserve the forests of the country from destructive flames which have for years past caused an annual property loss of \$25,000,000, and cost each year an average of 75 human beings.

She is Miss Hallie M. Daggett, and she is the only woman lookout employed by the forest service. As soon as the season of forest fires begins this year, Miss Daggett will again be found at her post. Posted in her small cabin on top of the mountain peak it will be her duty, as last year, to scan the vast forest in every direction as far as she can see by naked eye and telescope, by day for smoke, and for the red glare of fire by night, and report the result of her observations by telephone to the main office of the forest patrol miles and miles away.

Few women would care for such a job, fewer still would seek it, and still less would be able to stand the strain of the infinite loneliness, or the roar of the violent storms which sweep the peak, or the menace of the wild beasts which roam the heavily wooded ridges. Miss Daggett, however, not only eagerly longed for the station, but secured it after considerable exertion, and now she declares that she enjoyed the life and was intensely interested in the work she had to do.

Perhaps the call of the wild is in her blood. Her parents are pioneers, her father, John Daggett, having crossed the isthmus in 1852, and her mother, a mere baby, being taken across the plains from Kentucky the same year. Miss Daggett was born at the Klamath mine, in the shadow of the peak on which the lookout station is perched. She spent most of her early years out of doors riding and tramping over the hills with her brother, so that it was natural that, with her in-born love of the forests, she should be anxious to take part in the fight which the forest service men are making for the protection of the forests. Debarred by her sex, however, from the kind of work which most of the service men are doing, she saw no opportunity until lookout stations were established, and then after earnest solicitation secured the place she held so well.

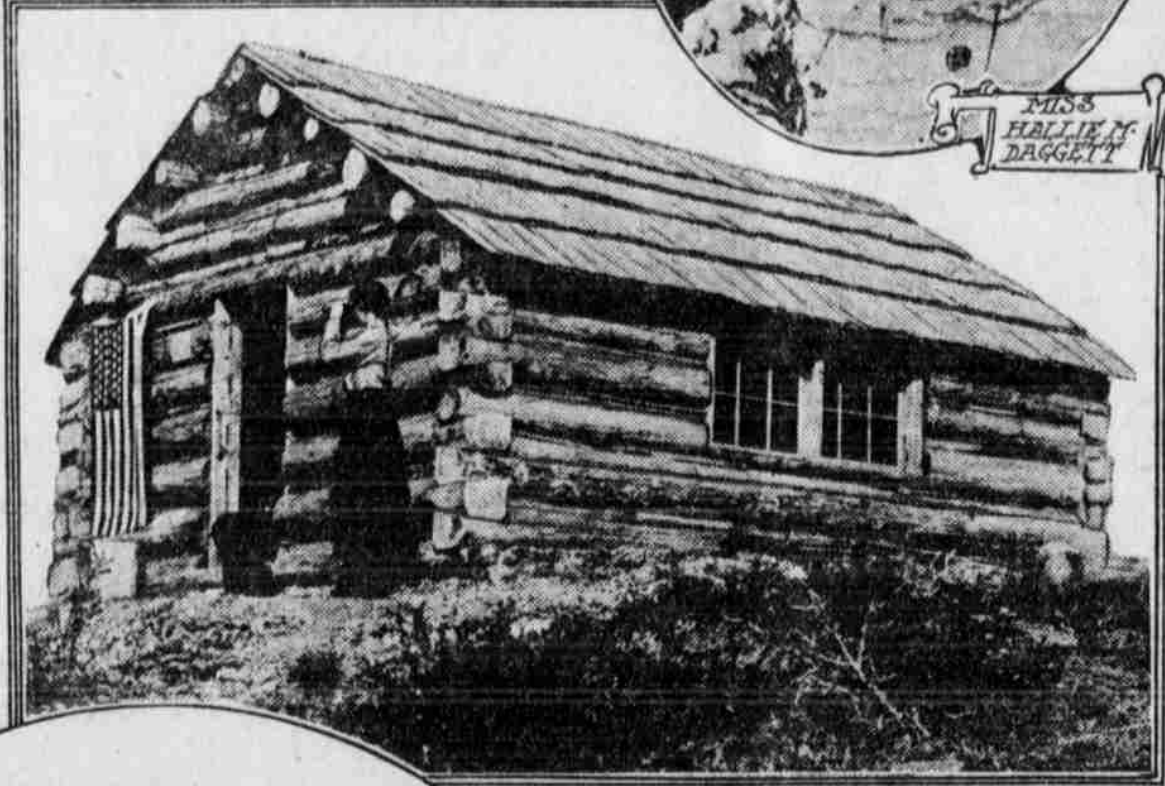
Some of the service men predicted that after a few days of life on the peak she would telephone that she was frightened by the loneliness and the danger, but she was full of pluck and high spirit, and day after day as her keen eyes ranged the hills which constitute the Salmon river watershed, and as she made her daily reports by telephone, she grew more and more in love with her work. Even when the telephone wires were broken and when for a long time she was cut off from communication with the world below, she did not lose heart. She not only filled the place with all the skill which a trained man could have shown, but she was reappointed when the fire season opened a few weeks ago.

Miss Daggett's earliest recollection, she says, abounds with smoke-clouded summer days and fires that wandered over the country at their own sweet will, unchecked unless they happened to interfere seriously with someone's claim or woodland, when they were usually turned off by back-firing and headed in another direction, to continue their mischief until they either died for lack of fuel or were quenched by the fall rains. Consequently, she grew up with a fierce hatred of the devastating fires, and welcomed the force which arrived to combat them. But not until the lookout stations were installed did there come an opportunity for her to join what had up to that time been a man's fight; although she and her sister had frequently been able to help on the small things, such as extinguishing spreading camp fires, or carrying supplies to the firing line.

Then through the liberal-mindedness and courtesy of the officials in her district, she was given the position of lookout at Eddy's Gulch station in the Fourth district of the Klamath national forest; and entered upon her work the first day of June, 1913, with a firm determination to make good, for she knew that the appointment of a woman was rather in the nature of an experiment, and naturally felt that there was a great deal due the men who had been willing to give her the chance.

It was a swift change in three days, from San Francisco, civilization and sea level, to a solitary cabin nearly 6,500 feet elevation and three hours' hard climb from anywhere. But in spite of the fact that almost the very first question asked by everyone is: "Isn't it awfully lonesome up there?" Miss Daggett declares that never for a moment, after the first half-hour following her sister's departure with the pack animals, when she had a chance to look around, did she feel the slightest longing to retrace her steps. While she had been on the peak before in her early rambles, she had never thought of it as a home. One of her pet dreams had always been of a log cabin, and here was an ideal one, brand new the summer before, and as cozy indoors as could be wished, while outdoors, all outdoors, was a grander doorway than any estate in the land could boast. It was a prospect of glorious freedom from four walls and a time-clock.

Klamath peak is not really a peak in the conventional sense of the word, but it is rather the culmination of a long series of ridges running up from the watersheds of the north and south forks of the Salmon river. Its central location in the district makes it, however, an ideal spot for a



KLAMATH PEAK LOOKOUT STATION—MISS DAGGETT'S CABIN



VIEW FROM TOP OF KLAMATH PEAK, SHOWING FIRE DAMAGE



MISS DAGGETT ON TOP OF KLAMATH PEAK

station. Miss Daggett describes it as the hub of a wheel with the lines of ridges as spokes, and an unbroken rim of peaks encircling around it; some eternally snow-capped, and most all of them higher than itself.

To the east there is a shoulder of snowy Shasta and an unseen neighbor lookout on Eagle peak; to the south, the high, jagged edge of Trinity county, and, just discernible with the glasses, a shining new cabin on Packer's peak; to the west, behind Orleans mountain with its ever-watchful occupant, a faint glimpse of the shining Pacific shows with a favorable sunset, and all in between is a seeming wilderness of ridges and gulches, making up what is said to be one of the finest continuous views in the whole of the West.

"Bird and animal life were also very plentiful," says Miss Daggett, "filling the air with songs and chatter, coming to the doorstep for food, and often invading the cabin itself. I positively declined owning a cat on account of its destructive intentions on small life—a pair of owls proving satisfactory as mice catchers, besides being amusing as neighbors as well. Frequently deer fed around the cabin in the evenings, and there was a small bear down by the spring, besides several larger ones whose tracks I often saw on the trail. In addition to these, a couple of porcupines helped keep me from becoming lonesome, by using various means to find a way into the cabin at night."

"All these animals being harmless, it had never been my custom to carry a gun in so-called western fashion, until one morning I discovered a big panther track on the trail, and then in deference to my family's united request, I buckled on the orthodox weapon, which had been accumulating dust on the cabin shelf, and proceeded to be picturesque, but to no avail, as the beast did not again return."

"At many of the stations the question of wood and water is a serious one on account of the elevation; but I was especially favored, as wood lies about in all shapes and quantities, only waiting for an ax to convert it into suitable lengths, while water unlimited could be melted from the snow banks which lingered until the last of July, although it did seem a little odd to go for water with a shovel in addition to a bucket. Later the supply was packed in canvas sacks from a spring about a mile away in the timber. This was always a job sought by anyone coming up on horseback; and thanks to the kindly efforts of the guards who passed that way, and my few visitors, it was always easy to keep the pot boiling. My sister brought up my supplies and mail from home every week, a distance of nine miles."

The daily duties of life at Miss Daggett's lookout are small, merely consisting of an early morning and late evening tramp of half a mile to the point of the ridge, where the trees obscure the north view of the cabin, and a constant watch on all sides for a trace of smoke. A watch of this nature soon becomes an instinct, according to Miss Daggett, for she found herself often awakening in the night for a look around. In fact, she



MISS HALLIE M. DAGGETT

soon became to feel, as she expresses it, that the lookout is "an ounce of prevention." Then there are three daily reports to be sent to the district headquarters in town, to prove that everything is serene, and extra reports if they are not, and lastly a little, very little, housework to do.

Not a very busy day, as judged by our modern standards of rush, but a lookout's motto might be "wait." They also serve who only stand and wait." And there is always the great map spread out at one's feet to study by new lights and shadows while waiting, and the ever-busy phone with its numerous calls, which must be kept within hearing, so that one cannot wander far.

That phone, Miss Daggett says, with its gradually extending feelers, made her feel exactly like a big spider in the center of a web, with the fires for flies; and those fires were certainly treated to exactly the speedy fate of the other unwelcome pests. Through all the days up to the close of the term on November 6, when a light snow put an end to all danger of fires, she felt an ever-growing sense of responsibility, which finally came to be almost a feeling of proprietorship, resulting in the desire to punish anyone careless enough to set fires in her "door-yard."

The utter dependence on the telephone was brought vividly to Miss Daggett's mind one afternoon soon after her arrival, when an extra heavy electrical storm, which broke close by, caused one of the electrical arresters on the outside of the cabin to burn out, quite contrary to precedent, and she was cut off from the world until the next day, when someone from the office came up in haste to find out the cause of the silence and set things aright. They often joke now, she says, about expecting to find her hidden under a log for safety, but it wasn't quite so funny at the time.

There seems, however, to be very little actual danger from these storms, in spite of the fact that they are very heavy and numerous at that elevation. One soon becomes accustomed to the racket, or, at least, Miss Daggett did. But in the damage these storms cause by starting fires lies their chief interest to the lookout, for it requires a quick eye to detect, in among the rage of fogs which arise in their wake, the small puff of smoke which tells of some tree struck in a burnable spot. Generally it shows at once, but in one instance there was a lapse of almost two weeks before the fall of the smoldering top fanned up enough smoke to be seen.

At night the new fires show up like tiny candle flames, and are easily spotted against the dark background of the ridges, but are not so easy to exactly locate for an immediate report. Upon the speed and accuracy of this report, however, depends the efficiency of the service, as was proved by the summer's record of extra small acreage burned in spite of over forty fires reported.

To the electrical storms, Miss Daggett adds, are attributed most of our present-day fires, as traveler and citizen alike are daily feeling more responsible for the preservation of the riches bestowed by nature, and although some still hold to the same views as one old-timer, who made the comment, when lightning fires were being discussed, that he "guessed that was the Almighty's way of clearing the forests," the general trend of opinion seems to be that man, in the form of forest service, is doing an excellent work in keeping a watchful eye on the limits of that bitherto wholesale clearing.

## GEN. FRENCH TELLS HOW STRATEGY SAVED BRITISH FROM ANNIHILATION

London.—Many English breakfasts went untasted while the people read the graphic account by Field Marshal Sir John French of the heroic fight made by the British expeditionary force to keep from being annihilated. Like a wildcat pursued by hounds, the British force backed stubbornly toward the River Oise, constantly showing its teeth, but realizing that it must attain the river or perish.

### Text of the Report.

The report is published in the London Gazette, the official organ. It is as follows:

"The transportation of the troops from England by rail and sea was effected in the best order and without a check. Concentration was practically completed on the evening of Friday, August 21, and I was able to make dispositions to move the force during Saturday to positions I considered most favorable from which to commence the operations which General Joffre requested me to undertake."

General French then described in detail the position taken up by his forces at and on the east and west of Mons, and the retirement of the center behind Mons on Sunday, August 23. He continues:

### Surprised by Joffre's Message.

"Meanwhile, about five in the afternoon, I received a most unexpected message from General Joffre by telegraph, telling me that at least three German corps were moving on my position in front and that another corps was engaged in a turning movement from the direction of Tournai. He also informed me that the two reserve French divisions and the Fifth French army corps on my right were retreating, the Germans having on the previous day gained possession of the passage of the Sambre between Charleroi and Namur."

### Had Reserve Position Ready.

"In view of the possibility of my being driven from the Mons position I had previously ordered a position in the rear to be reconnoitered."

"When the news of the retirement of the French and the heavy German threatening on my front reached me I endeavored to confirm it by aeroplane reconnaissance and as a result of this I determined to effect a retirement to the Maubeuge position at daybreak on the 24th."

### Fighting on the 24th.

"A certain amount of fighting continued along the whole line throughout the night and at daybreak on the 24th the second division from the neighborhood of Harmignies made a powerful demonstration as if to retake Binche. Under cover of this demonstration the Second corps retired on the line of Dour, Quarouble and Frameries. The third division on the right of the corps suffered considerable loss in this operation from the enemy who had retaken Mons."

"The Second corps halted on this line, where they intrenched themselves, enabling Sir Douglas Haig with the First corps to withdraw to the new position and he effected this without much further loss, reaching the line from Bavy to Maubeuge about seven in the evening."

"About 7:30 in the morning General Allenby received a message from Sir Charles Fergusson, commanding the fifth division, saying he was very hard pressed and in urgent need of support. On receipt of this message General Allenby drew in his cavalry and endeavored to bring direct support to the fifth division."

### Re-Enforcements Brought Up.

"The Nineteenth infantry brigade, which had been guarding the line of communications, was brought by rail to Valenciennes on the 23d and 24d. On the morning of the 24th they were moved out to a position south of Quarouble to support the left flank of the Second corps."

"With the assistance of cavalry Sir Horace Smith Dorrien was enabled to effect his retreat to a new position, although having two corps of the enemy on his front and one threatening his flank. He suffered great losses in doing so."

"At nightfall a position was occupied by the Second corps to the west of Bavy, the First corps to the right. The right was protected by the fortress of Maubeuge, the left by the Nineteenth infantry brigade in positions between Jenlain and Bruay and by cavalry on the outer flank. The French were still retiring and I had no support except such as was afforded by the fortress of Maubeuge, and determined efforts of the enemy to get around my flank assured me that it was his intention to hem me against that place and surround me."

### Not a Moment to Be Lost.

"I felt that not a moment must be lost in returning to another position. The retirement was resumed in the early morning of the 25th to a position in the neighborhood of LeCateau and the rear guard was ordered to be clear of Maubeuge and Bavy by 2:30 a. m. Two cavalry brigades, with the divisional cavalry of the Second corps, covered the movement of the cavalry division, and the remainder of the cavalry division, with the Nineteenth brigade, the whole under command of General Allenby, covered the west flank."

"The fourth division commenced its retirement at LeCateau on Sunday, the 25d, and by the morning of the 26th 11 battalions and a brigade of artillery, with the divisional staff, were available for service."

"Although the troops had been ordered to occupy the Cambrai-LeCateau-Landrecies position and ground had, during the 25th, been partially preparing and intrenched, I had grave doubts—owing to information I had received as to the accumulating strength of the enemy against me—as to the wisdom of standing there to fight."

"Having regard to the continued retirement of the French right, my exposed left flank, the tendency of the enemy's western corps to envelop me, and more than all the exhausted condition of the troops, I determined to make a great effort to continue the retreat till I could put some substantial obstacle, such as the Somme or the Oise, between my troops and the enemy, and afford the former some opportunity for rest and reorganization."

"Orders were therefore sent to the corps commanders to continue their retreat as soon as they possibly could toward the general line of Vermand, St. Quentin and Ribemont, and the cavalry under General Allenby were ordered to cover the retirement. Throughout the 25th and far into the evening the First corps continued to march on Landrecies, following the road along the eastern border of the forest of Mormal, and arrived at Landrecies about ten o'clock."

### Enemy Allows No Rest.

"I had intended that the corps should come further west, so as to fill up the gap between LeCateau and Landrecies, but the men were exhausted and could not get further in without a rest."

"The enemy, however, would not allow them this rest, and about 9:30 that evening the report was received that the Fourth Guards brigade in Landrecies was heavily attacked by troops of the Ninth German army corps, who were coming through the forest to the north of the town. This brigade fought most gallantly and caused the enemy to suffer a tremendous loss in issuing from the forest into the narrow streets of the town. This loss has been estimated from reliable sources at between 700 and 1,000."

"At the same time information reached me from Sir Douglas Haig that his first division was also heavily engaged south and east of Marilles."

"Two French divisions assisted the First corps to retire in the night of the 25th. Second corps took position between Caudry and LeCateau."

### Attacked by Four Corps.

"At daybreak it became apparent that the enemy was throwing the bulk of his strength against the left of the position occupied by the Second corps and the fourth division. At this time the guns of four German army corps were in position against them, and Sir Horace Smith Dorrien reported to me that he judged it impossible to continue his retirement at daybreak, as ordered, in the face of such an attack."

"I sent him orders to use his utmost endeavors to break off the action and retire at the earliest possible moment, as it was impossible for me to send him support, the First corps being at the moment incapable of movement."

"The French cavalry corps under General Sordet was coming up on our left rear early in the morning and I sent him an urgent message to do his utmost to come up and support the retirement of my left flank, but owing to the fatigue of his horses he found himself unable to intervene in any way."

### Outnumbered Four to One.

"There had been no time to intrench the position properly, but the troops showed a magnificent front to the terrible fire which confronted them. The artillery, although outnumbered by at least four to one, made a splendid fight and inflicted heavy losses on their opponents."

"At length it became apparent that if complete annihilation was to be avoided retirement must be attempted and the order was given to commence it about 3:30 in the afternoon. The movement was covered with most devoted intrepidity and determination by the artillery, which had itself suffered heavily, and the fine work done by the cavalry in the further retreat from the position assisted materially the final completion of this most difficult and dangerous operation. Fortunately, the enemy had himself suffered too heavily to engage in an energetic pursuit."

"The retreat was continued far into the night of the 26th and through the 27th and the 28th, on which date the troops halted on the line from Noyen, Chauny and LeFere, having then thrown off the weight of the enemy's pursuit."

### French Come to Rescue.

"On the 27th and the 28th I was much indebted to General Sordet and the French cavalry division, which he commanded, for materially assisting my retirement, and successfully driving back some of the enemy on Cambrai. General d'Amade also, with the Sixty-first and Sixty-second reserve divisions, moved down from the neighborhood of Arras on the enemy's right flank and took much pressure off the rear of the British forces."

"This closed the period covering the heavy fighting, which commenced at Mons on Sunday afternoon, August 23, and which really constituted a four days' battle. At this point, therefore, I propose to close the present dispatch."