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## **Survivor Tells of His Escape**

“I was nearly dead. I just made it.”

And he looked it, Ken Etherton was so exhausted by his struggles in the heavy fire threatened brush along Alder Springs road last night he has to get medical care today.

“I couldn’t have gone a step further,” he said. Etherton, one of nine survivors of the Powder House Point blaze, told his story at the foot of the mountain where he had been taken for a rest. “We had just given thanks for the milk and sandwiches and had sat down to eat, he said. “When we heard someone yelling. It was Charles Lafferty, telling us to get out as fast as we could.” Etherton and the eight others struggled through brush at the rate of about 25 yards a minute. They didn’t know it, but they beat the flames to the ridgetop by about 15 minutes. “I don’t know what happened to the others,” he said.

“They just scattered. I was wondering all the time whether each step would be my last and I would fall.” Across the canyon, another member of the New Tribes Mission was watching the flight of the 24 men from the racing flames. He was Homer Hancock, who was in charge of the hose truck. “I saw the doomed men’s lights,” he said. “It looked as if they were being driven off their course by the flames. Suddenly there were flames behind them then a puff of smoke. I didn’t see the lights anymore.” There were no shouts to be heard, either from the men. The roar of flames which often sounded like heavy rain pouring off a roof killed all other sound. Hancock’s truck caught fire and the seat were damaged slightly before he got turned around and headed down the canyon. Only one truck got through the canyon for the next few hours. It was driven by State ranger R.A. Casaurang, who drove through the flames to reach his headquarters at Elk Creek.

Here is a list of the survivors: Jake Toews, Lloyd Madison, Don Slaughter, Bill Jackson, Bill Baker, Duane Stous, Les Thompson, Leon Smith and Ken Etherton. Etherton is the camp dentist.