

MAJOR EVAN W. KELLEY

1929-1944

Evan W. Kelley was born in Sierra City California, October 19, 1882. He entered the Forest Service May 1, 1906, as a forest guard on the then Yuba National Forest, later incorporated as a part of the Tahoe National Forest. Later that year he qualified through civil service examination for employment as assistant forest ranger. In due course he was promoted to forest ranger, and for a time served in that capacity in charge of a ranger district which now forms a part of the Plumas and Tahoe National Forests. In this position he was assigned as a ranger-at-large, and did special work until the creation of the Eldorado National Forest in 1910. He then became the first forest supervisor of that unit.

In 1915 he was transferred to the regional office of the Forest Service as a national forest examiner, with headquarters at San Francisco. He served as inspector on the staff of the regional chief of Operation, having the special assignment of general supervision over construction and maintenance of all classes of national forest improvements.

Soon after World War I broke out in 1917, he entered the service and was commissioned Captain in the 10th Engineers, U. S. Army. In September, 1917 he went overseas as Captain of Company F of that Regiment. In August, 1918, he was promoted to the rank of Major of the Second Battalion of the 10th Engineers, and was given jurisdiction over a district which embraced all sawmilling and logging operations in several Departments of Eastern France. Later the 10th Regiment was combined with the 20th Regiment of Engineers. He served as Commander of the 12th Battalion, and later the 9th Battalion of that Regiment. He remained in France until eight months after the Armistice was signed, having charge of road-repair work, and closing up much of the operations of the 20th Engineers in several of the territorial districts over which the activities of the regiment had spread.

On his return to the United States in late June, 1919, he was reassigned to the Forest Service and placed in charge of forest development road work in the California region. In 1920 he was transferred to the office of the Chief Forester of the Forest Service in Washington, as inspector in the division of Operation. For the ensuing five years he served in the capacity of field inspector in all the activities of that division, which included finance, personnel, fire control, forest improvements, and equipment development.

He originated the first draft of the Manual for Forest Development Roads; rewrote the Forest Service Trail Manual, and the Telephone Handbook; was the author of the first Forest Service Fire Control Equipment Manual; and co-author of the first issue of the Glossary of Fire Control Terms. During these years he contributed to the development of fire control technique in all its phases.

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In February, 1925, he was made Regional Forester in charge of the Eastern National Forest Region, a territory which then embraced the national forests from New England down through the southern states and westward to and including Oklahoma. During the four years he was in charge of that region he did much to develop the administrative organization and the stimulation of research in the many involved silvicultural problems of that extensive territory.

In May, 1929, because of his extensive experience in the West and his familiarity with the problems of fire control, he was named Regional Forester at Missoula, Montana, headquarters of the Northern Region (northeastern Washington, Montana, northern Idaho and northwestern South Dakota) -- one of the most difficult "fire regions" of the country.

In recognition of his public service and contributions to sound forest land management in the region, in 1940 the Montana State University bestowed upon Major Kelley the honorary degree of Master of Forest Engineering.

When the Secretary of Agriculture assigned the Emergency Rubber Project to the Forest Service in March, 1942, Major Kelley's wide experience in organizational problems, his demonstrated ability to handle large-scale operations, and his engineering experience were called upon, and he was sent to California to organize and start the production of guayule rubber in the Salinas Valley, and to lay the ground work for the extension of the project in line with the authorizing legislation.

He is a member of the Society of American Foresters, the Northwest Scientific Association, and holds a life membership in the American Forestry Association.

Major Kelley retired in October 1944 and has resided since that time in Santa Barbara, California where he has been active in many personal and community projects until just a few months prior to his death. ← Oct. 3, 1966

Known survivors are a sister, Mrs. Margaret Farrell, Placerville, California, two nephews, Norman Farrell Berkeley, California, and ~~Evan Chappius, Susanville, California.~~ *Allyn Farrell, Smartville, California*

The body will be cremated privately Wednesday, October 5, and the ashes interred in the Santa Barbara Cemetery. Memorials may be made either to the Heart Fund or to the Evan W. Kelley Scholarship Fund, School of Forestry, University of Montana, Missoula, Montana.