



## Daniel Holmes Jan. 16, 1978–Oct. 2, 2004

A few years back I met a guy who in many ways changed my views on life and caused me to redefine the things I believed and the goals I envisioned. He was the new guy at Babbitt's Backcountry downtown and we ended up sharing a love for the outdoors, climbing and generally geeking out on gear and life in general.

On Sat, Oct. 2, that bright beacon of positivity and boundless life was squelched by the falling top of a flaming 100-foot white fir in Kings Canyon National Park in Southern California. Dan Holmes had been a member of the Arrowhead Hotshots, an elite crew of firefighters who routinely traveled the country, tackling the largest forest fires around. Dan's funeral was on Fri, Oct. 8 in Rochester, N.H., and judging from the news reports it was a hero's farewell, complete with local fire engines and a large por-

tion of the Arrowhead Hotshots present.

Although Dan lived in Flagstaff only a short time, he made an indelible mark on the local community. From his infectious smile to his trademark quote, "Word life," Dan was the type of guy who imparted a bit of goodness on everyone. His enthusiasm for life led him to delve into climbing with unmatched passion, working in Rainier and Denali national parks, attaining the summits of both landmark peaks with a relatively small amount of experience. He also ended up in New Zealand for a climbing stint in the Southern Alps. I have never seen anyone pick up anything with such gusto—and thus was the path of his life. Dan packed more into his 26 years than most people manage to fit into a lifetime.

- Though he moved to Bellingham, Wash., Dan would frequently return to town, always creating a stir and a storm of hugs and backslapping wherever he went.

In reality, Dan's death is a bitter yet joyous occasion; it is a celebration of how he lived, which was always about the moment, and more than all else, the beauty of the nature and life. If any of us could live life with just half of Dan's enthusiasm, we would be achieving something great indeed. Word life Dan! Wherever you are, I'm sure your smiling on the thin air of a summit.

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**Ryan Heinsius**