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Smokejumper biographies for 1943 rookie class, J - Z

National Smokejumper Association

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1943 Smokejumper Rookies

Jansen—Zimmerman

Gus Irwin Janzen (Cave Junction '43)

Gus died September 25, 2011, in Okeene, Oklahoma. He was born February 5, 1920, in Newton, KS. Gus went through schools in Corn, OK, and graduated from Corn H.S. and joined the Mennonite Church. He was going to Southwestern State College in Weatherford when he was drafted into the CPS program.

Gus jumped the 1943-44 seasons as part of the small crew at Cave Junction, Oregon. He made a total of 23 training and fire jumps.

After the war, Gus went into the custom wheat harvesting business in the Okeene area that took him from Oklahoma to Montana. He was a member of the Okeene Mennonite Brethren Church and was active in Mennonite charitable efforts. Gus was inducted in the Blaine County Hall of Fame in 1998. He was involved in the career for 40 years before developing the family farm in partnership with his three sons.

Howard Paul Jernigan (Missoula '43)

Paul died March 3, 2013. He was born in 1919 and was a member of the Quakers Church. Paul was drafted into the Civilian Public Service in 1941 from Greensboro, N.C. His first camp was Camp 19 at Buck Creek, N.C., where he fought fires and did park maintenance. From there he went to CPS-103 at Seeley Lake, MT, to be trained as a smokejumper. He only jumped the 1943 season and got a single fire jump.

Paul remembers a practice jump where Frank Derry yanked him back into the plane. Paul's static line had come undone, and the wind had wrapped it around his neck. "Above the roar of the motor I heard some choice Frank Derry words, then felt a kick on my backside which got me out the door. That evening Frank Derry called an emergency safety meeting. He talked long and loud about the necessary attention and care due static lines if we wanted to survive as smokejumpers. All sixty of us knew why the meeting was held."

Paul finished his service at Camp 108 near Gatlinburg, TN, where he fought fires and maintained the park. He was discharged in 1943.

Paul graduated with his bachelor's degree from Guilford College in Greensboro, NC, and his master's from Appalachian State University. He was a school Principal in the Mecklenburg School District for 33 years retiring in 1982.

Stewart S. “Lloyd” Johnson (McCall '43)

Lloyd, 101, died September 19, 2017, in Fruitland, Idaho. He was born June 2, 1916. His parents were early McCall pioneers.

He graduated from McCall H.S. and attended the University of Utah and the University of Idaho. Lloyd was an avid outdoorsman and, at age seven, was proclaimed the “world’s smallest ski jumper” at the McCall Winter Carnival. He was active in skiing until age 90 and was instrumental in promoting Sun Valley and skiing in Idaho.

Lloyd worked for the USFS for many years and was the original smokejumper at McCall when the base was established in 1943. He jumped at McCall 1943-53 and has been recognized nationally as the oldest living smokejumper until his passing. Of smokejumping he said, “We never lost a fire because we got on them early.”

In 1954 Lloyd move to Fruitland where he was the owner of a Westcott Oil distributorship until his retirement. After retirement, he managed the New Plymouth Cenex Farm Center for ten years.

Lloyd was a Pioneer Smokejumper and one of the founding fathers of the profession.

Albert Wesley Kern (Missoula '43)

Wes, 45, died November 21, 1962, and was born January 3, 1917. He was drafted into the Civilian Public Service in 1941 from Springtown, Arkansas, where he was a farmer. His first assignment was to Camp 7 at Magnolia, Arkansas, which was run by the Brethren Church and dealt in soil conservation work.

From there Wes, went to Camp 103 and was among the first group of CPS men to train as smokejumpers. He jumped at Missoula 1943-44 before transferring to Cave Junction for the 1945 season. He is buried at Coffelt Cemetery in Mason Valley, Arkansas.

Norman F. Kriebel Jr. (Missoula'43)

Norman, 86, of Bryn Mawr, Pennsylvania, a retired CIA agent, died of pulmonary fibrosis December 14, 2004, at his home. He was born July 15, 1918, in Lansdale, Pennsylvania. He grew up in Amber, PA, and graduated from Wissahickon High School and earned a bachelor's degree from the University of Pennsylvania. Norman entered Civilian Public Service in 1941 and was among the first group of CPS men to be trained as smokejumpers in 1943.

In 1945 he was recruited by the Federal Communications Commission in Washington. Two years later, he joined the newly created Central

Intelligence Agency as a technical information specialist. Later in his career he served as an agency bureau chief in Tokyo, Cyprus and then in London. He retired in 1975 and moved to Villanova, Pennsylvania and then to Bryn Mawr where he is buried in the Church of the Redeemer Cemetery.

Milton Charles Lamm (Missoula '43)

Milt, 96, died March 12, 2015, in Ramah, Colorado. He was born in Ramah, October 26, 1918, and was a farmer when he entered Civilian Public Service in 1942. Milt was among the first group of CPS men trained as smokejumpers and he jumped the 1943-44 seasons. He said he lost an eye during the winter of 1944 and worked at the base during the 1945 season but not as a jumper.

He was discharged in 1946 and returned to Ramah where he grew wheat and raised cattle on his 880-acre ranch. Milt is buried in the Ramah Cemetery.

William S. Laughlin (Cave Junction '43)

Bill died April 6, 2001. He was raised in Oregon where his father taught at Willamette University. After high school he worked as a patrolman for two Oregon State Parks. In 1938 he went with a Smithsonian field group to Alaska to study pre-historic migration. He and another person located a site where, in 1974, they discovered tools seven to nine thousand years old.

Bill graduated from Willamette University and continued graduate studies at Bryn Mawr College.

After entering Civilian Public Service, he arrived at Camp 103 at Seeley Lake, MT. in the spring of 1943. There, in addition to regular smokejumper skills, he was trained by Frank Derry in parachute rigging and repair as well as spotter training. Bill then went to the Redwood Ranger Station in Cave Junction, Oregon, where he jumped for two seasons finishing with 34 total jumps.

Bill returned to do graduate work at Harvard spending much time in the Aleutians doing anthropometric measurements for his Ph.D. thesis. After graduation from Harvard, he taught at the University of Oregon (1949-55), Univ. of Wisconsin (1955-69) and the Univ. of Connecticut (1969-90).

Tedford P. Lewis (Missoula '43)

Tedford died November 20, 2007, in Webster Groves, Missouri. He was one of the original CPS-103 jumpers. He taught at the American University of Beirut in 1947-48 and traveled extensively in the Middle East before returning home to Webster where he started a construction business.

Tedford and his wife, Margaret, were leaders in local chapters of international peace organizations, including the American Friends Service Committee, War Resisters League, and Fellowship of Reconciliation.

They have been active members of the Religious Society of Friends (Quakers). Tedford was a founder of the World Community Center and gave generous support to causes that helped refugees and disadvantaged people around the world.

Dr. Amos R. Little (Missoula '43)

Dr. Little, 93, died June 22, 2010, in Helena, Montana. He received his bachelor's degree from Dartmouth and his medical degree from Johns Hopkins University in 1942.

Bud served with the US Army Air Force, Air Rescue Service and received his parachute training at Missoula in 1943. In 1944 he parachuted to the 11,000-foot crash site of a B-17 and provided medical attention to four surviving crewmembers. At the time, it was listed as the highest parachute landing on record.

After the war Bud settled in Helena and practiced medicine there from 1946-78. He was active in International Skiing and served as the vice president of the International Ski Federation from 1970-88.

Alan Burton McRae (Missoula '43)

Alan, 87, died December 26, 2006, in Berkeley, California. He was born November 16, 1919, in Seattle, Washington and was a member of the Congregational Christian Church. Alan was living in Chicago when he registered for the draft and entered Civilian Public Service in 1942.

He was among the first group of CPS men who trained as smokejumpers. A note from his daughter says that he was "injured quite severely during training." This seems to explain why Alan was released from CPS in December 1943. His employment after the war is listed as construction manager and he was a builder in Chicago and Langley, Washington. He is buried in the Langley Woodman Cemetery on Langley Island, WA.

Sheldon H. Mills (Missoula '43)

Sheldon, 81, died July 31, 1998. He was born July 2, 1917, in Douglas, North Dakota. He grew up on a farm near Bellaire, Michigan. Sheldon was one of six children. His father was a traveling evangelist and "was seldom home."

Sheldon graduated from Bellaire H.S. in 1935 and went to work on a farm for \$1.00 a day which he did for three years. When a friend offered to

pay college tuition, he went to Albion College in Michigan where he graduated with hopes of becoming a high school teacher and track coach.

He ended up with the CPS-103 smokejumper unit at Nine Mile and, after training, spent the first two seasons at Moose Creek R.S. Sheldon was injured while falling a snag on a work project, was unconscious for five days and spent six weeks in the hospital before returning to jumping. He was one of the few CPS jumpers to jump all three seasons of the program jumping 1943-45.

After the war he returned to Bellaire and started a 33-year teaching career. "I was active in teacher organizations, working for such things as teach tenure and the right to bargain collectively." Sheldon retired in 1979 and worked on his small farm.

Harry Arteemas Mishler (Missoula '43)

Harry "Bub" Mishler, 84, died May 3, 2001, in Portland, Oregon. He was born February 18, 1917, in Hubbard, Oregon, and was raised in Sheridan, Oregon. Bub was a Mennonite and entered Civilian Public Service in 1943. He was one of the first group of CPS men to be trained as smokejumpers and jumped all three years of the program.

Bub, who worked as a logger before entering CPS, returned to that profession after the war. He moved to Portland in 1949 and worked as a glazier until his retirement.

Allen J. "Hoot" Moyer (Missoula '43)

Allen died December 20, 1990, in Deer Creek, Oklahoma. His grandfather was a Mennonite pastor and brought the Moyer family to Oklahoma in 1901. Allen was born on the family farm December 6, 1917. He attended school in Deer Creek and played football, participated in band and FFA activities.

Allen attended Northern Oklahoma Jr. College and later transferred to Bethel College in Kansas. After the war he intended to get his college degree, but his father was disabled in a farming accident and Allen had to take over the farm. However, all three of his sons were able to graduate from college.

He was one of the few Civilian Public Service Smokejumper to jump all three years the CPS jumpers handled operations out of Missoula.

Allen served on local school boards and was involved in raising sheep in the Deer Creek area. He was a member of the Mennonite Church and served on the board of director of his local church. His wife said that his time with the smokejumper unit was the highlight of his life.

James Asa Mundell (Missoula '43)

Asa died April 19, 2008. He lived in Lafayette, Oregon. Asa was born February 14, 1922 in the family home in Pinkstaff, IL.

He grew up in Colorado, the son of an itinerant minister. After two years at Kansas Wesleyan University, he was drafted in 1942 and reported to a CPS Camp at Downey, Idaho.

In 1943 he was accepted to the smokejumper unit in Missoula where he jumped that season. After the war, he finished his degree at Kansas Wesleyan and then graduated from the Iliff School of Theology in Denver.

Asa pastored many churches in Oregon, worked for the headquarter office of United Methodist Churches and retired from the ministry in 1987.

In 1993 Asa wrote and published "Static Lines and Canopies," a collection of remembrances of the CPS-103 Smokejumpers who kept the project alive during WWII.

William Edgar Nafziger Jr. (Missoula '43)

Ed, 90, died September 16, 2008, in Ephrata, Washington. He was born on December 12, 1917, near Springfield, Missouri. He was a Mennonite and entered Civilian Public Service in 1942 and was among the first group of CPS men trained as smokejumpers. Ed jumped at Missoula 1943-44 and at McCall in 1945 and had 29 jumps according to his records.

After the war Ed changed professions and moved from farming into education and earned his master's degree from Seattle Pacific University. He was fascinated by geology and led 38 hiking tours through the Grand Canyon. Ed was a student of the Bible and was involved in the Bible Science Association and the Ephrata First Baptist Church. He is buried at the Ephrata Cemetery.

Roy Edward Nussbaum (Missoula '43)

Roy, 92, died October 8, 2008, at the LuAnn Nursing Home in Nappanee, Indiana. He was born May 31, 1916, in Wakarusa, Indiana. Roy was a 1934 graduate of Wakarusa High School.

As a member of one of the Peace Churches during WWII, he elected alternative service and in 1943-45 he became one of the CPS (Civilian Public Service) smokejumpers.

Roy was a carpenter and retired from Terry Horein Builders and lived most of his life in the Granger, Indiana area. He was a member of the United States Badminton association and enjoyed and played badminton tournaments all over the United States. He enjoyed all sports, especially

Notre Dame basketball. Roy is buried at the Olive Cemetery in Wakarusa, Indiana.

Bertel John Olin (Missoula '43)

Bertel, 56, died September 27, 1974, in Jackson, Oregon. He was born April 29, 1918, in Chinook, Washington. He was a member of the Lutheran Church and drafted into Civilian Public Service in 1942 from Eugene, Oregon. His occupation at that time was listed as groundsman.

Bertel served in Camp 21 at Cascades Locks, Oregon, before reporting to Camp 103 to be trained as a smokejumper. He was among the first CPS men to be trained as smokejumpers. Bertel jumped one season before returning to Camp 21 where he was discharged in 1945. He was married to his wife, Betty, in 1947.

Oliver W. Petty (Missoula '43)

Oliver, 99, died April 6, 2014, in Albany, Oregon. He was born June 9, 1914, on a farm near Creswell, Oregon. Oliver graduated from Creswell HS in 1931 and worked for four years before enrolling in Eugene Bible College. After attending Eugene Bible College, he graduated from Oregon State with a degree in forestry management in 1940.

He was a conscientious objector during WWII and was in the first group of COs to train as smokejumpers in 1943. After his seven training jumps, he was stationed at Basin Creek and then at Big Prairie Ranger Station. His second and third years were spent at Nine Mile and was discharged on November 15, 1945. He jumped all three years of the CPS-103 program and finished with 39 jumps.

Oliver was a beekeeper after the war and established Fairview Apiaries also known as Gibson Hill Honey Farm. He was ahead of his times in the field and was instrumental in convincing farmers to rent bees to improve their crop yields. Oliver was a member of the American Beekeepers Assoc. for over 60 years and extensively traveled abroad.

Clarence Elwood Quay (Missoula '43)

Clarence, 99, died in Bridgewater, Virginia, on September 12, 2015. He was born August 11, 1916, in Spring City, Pennsylvania. In high school he participated in Track & Field and worked a lot on the family farm. He registered for the draft on October 16, 1940, when he was working for Bethlehem Steel where he had worked for five years. He received a draft deferment due to his skills at Bethlehem Steel.

Clarence was drafted into Civilian Public Service and, after working at several camps, was one of the 62 CPS men selected for the initial CPS-103 smokejumper group. "Ten days after arriving at Camp Paxon, I made my first parachute jump at 11:00 a.m. with Eagle parachute #535. The training was concise. No question too small to be answered. There was a strong emphasis on safety. October 5, 1943, Louie Goosen and I jumped two fires. Worked one for until 10:00p.m. and handled the other the next day."

When he was discharged in 1946, he returned to Bethlehem Steel but quit and did several jobs before entering the Church of the Brethren Bible School in Chicago. He graduated and went on to Bethany Bible Seminary where he earned his master's degree. Over the next 24 years, Clarence served four churches before retirement in 1981.

"I appreciated the opportunity to be a smokejumper with CPS-103. Being part of a minority group, even with different background and religious beliefs, it is possible to share in a sincere and meaningful fellowship. My life was enriched because of the experience."

David Gordon Ratigan (Missoula '43)

David was born November 20, 1925, in Missoula, Montana, where he lived his entire life except for a tour of duty in the military and a short teaching assignment in the Brady elementary and high school program in Brady, Montana.

David started smokejumping in Missoula in 1943, five months before turning 18 years of age. The smokejumper program had difficulty hiring men in 1943 because those that were physically qualified and were 18 or older were recruited or drafted for military duty during WWII. Only five of the 59 experienced smokejumpers from 1940, 1941, and 1942 fires season returned for 1943. From the Civilian Public Service program, sixty-two Conscientious Objectors (CO) whose religious faiths prevented them from engaging in combat but who still wished to serve their country, were trained as smokejumpers. David was not a CO, but somehow, he was hired as a smokejumper even though he was 17 years of age. He had at least one fire jump in 1943, in Yellowstone National Park.

After spending the 1943 summer as a smokejumper, and one month before turning 18, he enlisted in the U.S. Marine Corps on October 18, 1943, in an infantry battalion at Camp Elliott, San Diego, California. On May 13, 1945, he was wounded in action and discharged in January 1946. David returned to smokejumping at Missoula in 1946 and 1947. In 1946, he

had three practice and six fire jumps and in 1947, three practice and seven fire jumps.

David married in 1948 and was a student for five years at the University of Montana, majoring in education. He and his wife had careers in education in Missoula and did not have children. David was also active in local politics running for local Ward Offices in Missoula. David died February 26, 1993, at the age of 67 from colon and pancreatic cancer. He is buried in Saint Mary Cemetery in Missoula, Montana.

Leon H. Ratzlaff (Missoula '43)

Lee, 78, died May 20, 1998, in Henderson, Nebraska. He was born in Henderson October 31, 1919, with seven siblings on the family farm. Lee was a member of the Mennonite Church and graduated from Henderson H.S. before attending York College in Nebraska for a year. He then taught 15 months before he was drafted for service in World War II.

Lee was at one camp before going to the CPS-103 smokejumper unit in Montana and was among the first CPS jumpers trained in 1943. He was one of the few CPS jumpers who jumped all three years of the program.

Lee was worried about not qualifying for jumping due to his weight, which was close to the 135-pound minimum. Not taking any chances, he bought all the available rationed bananas – approximately five pounds of them – at a local grocery store and ate them before his final physical.

After the war Lee returned to farming until 1954 when he could no longer afford to live from the income of the farm. Lee joined York Manufacturing as a truck driver delivering supplies all over the U.S. and Canada. In 1972 he became partially paralyzed from a fall from his truck.

From Lee's wife, "By word and example, he encouraged his children to think and to make decisions for themselves. Thank God this was accomplished before he lost the ability effectively communicate. Lee saw himself as part of God's Kingdom and his contribution being that of a simple man with high ideals."

Richard "Dick" Frederick Rehfeldt (Missoula '43)

Dick was born November 5, 1921, in Chicago, Illinois. He was a forestry student in 1940 at Iowa State University, graduating later. Dick was a Conscious Objector of the Methodist faith, seeking exemption based on his religious beliefs for entering the military in WWII. He entered the Big Flats Civilian Public Service (CPS) Camp, Camp Number 046-01 on November 23, 1942. When he entered, he listed his occupation as forester. Big Flats

was a USDA Soil Conservation Service sponsored camp with the primary mission being the prevention of soil erosion.

When the Forest Service solicited CPS volunteers for smokejumper training, Dick volunteered, and he was selected for training in 1943. He continued as a smokejumper through 1945 making at least five fire jumps.

Beginning in late 1945, veterans were being discharged from military duty and they were the primary work force taking the place of Conscientious Objectors in the 1946 smokejumper program. After smokejumping ended in 1945, Dick transferred to CPS Camp 108-01 in Gatlinburg, Tennessee. It was a national park service camp supporting the work of the Great Smoky Mountains National Park.

In the summer of 1948, while a forestry student at Iowa State University, Dick was a lookout and fire guard on the Lewis & Clark NF in Montana. In the 1950's he was a fire control officer on the Apache Indian Reservation in Whiteriver, Arizona. By 1960, Dick transferred to the Bureau of Land Management in the Salem and southwest Oregon area. Upon retirement, his last residence was Central Point, Oregon except as a winter visitor to the Phoenix, Arizona area.

Dick died January 23, 1991, in Central Point, Oregon.

D. Ellis Roberts (Missoula '43)

Ellis Roberts, 90, a physicist at the National Institute of Standards and Technology whose work in material testing helped develop the windows used on the space shuttle, died of kidney failure Oct. 19, 2009, at a nursing home in Newark, Del.

He was a member of the CPS-103 jumpers and jumped all three years the program existed. Ellis graduated from the Oregon State University in 1951 with a degree in physics. He joined the NIST in 1953 and retired in 1997.

Gerrit Andrew Rozeboom (Cave Junction '43)

Gerrit, 85, died May 18, 2003, in Martinez, California. He was born November 12, 1917, in Bowman, North Dakota. Gerrit was a Methodist and drafted into Civilian Public Service out of Sebastopol, California, in 1942. His occupation at that time was listed as being a farmer.

He was assigned to Camp 21 in Cascade Locks, Oregon, before going to Camp 103 to be trained as a smokejumper. Gerrit was one of the 10 jumpers assigned to the new base in Region 6 at Cave Junction, Oregon. That group made 12 fire jumps on five fires that season. From there he

went to Camp 27 in Tallahassee, Florida, to work on public health and hookworm elimination before being discharged in 1944.

Earl C. Schmidt (Missoula '43)

Earl, 94, died November 5, 2014, in Lancaster, PA. He was born in Harper, Kansas, February 13, 1920. Earl grew up in a Mennonite family and was drafted into Civilian Public Service in January 1942. He was in two camps before going to Camp Paxson at Seeley Lake in April 1943 to join the CPS-103 smokejumper unit. Earl jumped all three years of the program. After his release in 1946, he worked one trip on the United Relief ships taking cattle and horses to Poland.

Earl worked 23 years for Musselman Canning in Biglerville, PA and followed that with 20 years as an insurance agent in the same area. He was active in the CPS smokejumper reunions at Oskaloosa, Iowa, in 2000, and later at Hungry Horse, MT.

It was a letter from Earl that told of Wag Dodge introducing the “escape fire” during jumper training in 1943, years ahead of its use at Mann Gulch.

Warren C. Shaw (Missoula '43)

Warren died February 27, 2010, in Oklahoma City, Oklahoma. He was born December 15, 1921, on a family farm in Western Oklahoma and graduated from Hinton H.S. in 1940.

He entered the CCC and learned surveying while working on several project with the Army Corps of Engineers on proposed dam sites in Arkansas and Oklahoma. As a member of the Brethren Church, he was drafted into the Civilian Public Service in 1942 and continued his work as a surveyor with the Soil Conservation Service.

In the spring of 1943 Warren was among the first CPS people to be accepted to the smokejumper program and reported to Seeley Lake, MT. “I had never seen the mountains before, and I recall thinking that Missoula was the prettiest city that I had ever seen. When we arrived at Seeley Lake, it was beyond anything in my wildest dreams. Even the rich people in Oklahoma didn’t have anything like this.”

Warren was stationed at Moose Creek R.S. “I jumped three or four fires that season. After the last one we were snowed bound at a deserted cabin with tree elk hunters whose plane could not get in to pick them and their elk up. Anyone who has not eaten elk stew for breakfast, lunch and dinner for three days can’t imagine what they are missing.”

After his discharge in 1946, he returned to Oklahoma and worked the annual wheat harvest in the mid-west to Canada. In 1949 Warren returned

to surveying with one of the largest firms in Oklahoma. One of his big jobs was as engineer/architect on the Will Rogers Airport in Oklahoma City.

In 1966 he moved to the Oklahoma Highway Dept. where he was highly regarded as one of the top land surveyors in the state. Warren retired in 1985.

Philip B. Stanley (Missoula '43)

Phil, 89, died November 7, 2008, in Polson, Montana. He was born April 19, 1919, in Kiafeng, Honan Province, China to missionary parents. They returned to the U.S. in 1927 when the living situation became dangerous due to battles between local war lords.

Phil enrolled in a private school in New York, graduated, and entered Oberlin College but dropped out his second year. He was drafted into the Civilian Public Service in 1942.

He fought fire and maintained trails in forests on the west coast. It was during this time he heard that the fledgling smokejumper program was having trouble getting and keeping able-bodied firefighters due to the demands of WWII.

In October 1942 Phil wrote a letter to Axel Lindh, the head of Fire Control in Region One: "I occurred to me some three months ago that you might need men for your parachute firefighting corps, either for experimental purposes or to do the actual firefighting."

As a result of his letter writing campaign to Region 1 and Washington, D.C., the CPS-103 smokejumper unit was started in May 1943. Some 225 conscientious objectors kept the smokejumper program going from 1943-45. With many young men raised on farms in the mid-west, the group was known for their ability to work long and hard. Phil opened a photography store in Missoula after the war and eventually retired to Polson in 1990.

George Weir Stone (Missoula '43)

Weir, 94, of Elkhart, Indiana, died March 11, 2017. He was born in Elkhart May 19, 1922. Weir was a member of the Mennonite Church and drafted into the Civilian Public Service and was among the first CPS men to train as smokejumpers. He jumped the 1943-44 seasons at Missoula.

After the war he returned to Elkhart where he was a supervisor for Elkhart Products (copper fittings) where he retired after 30 years. Weir was an avid gunsmith and hunter still hunting into his 90s. He owned and operated trap shooting ranges for more than 58 years. He and his wife, Rosa, celebrated their 72nd wedding anniversary prior to his death.

Charles John Stucker (Missoula '43)

Charles, 82, died March 16, 1999, in Sun City, Arizona. He was born November 16, 1916, in Mahanoy City, Pennsylvania and was a member of the Evangelical & Reform Church. Charles was drafted into Civilian Public Service in 1941 and his occupation at that time was listed as Gas Service repairman. He served in camps in Maryland and California before reporting to Camp 103 to be trained as a smokejumper in 1943.

Charles jumped the 1943 season and was discharged from CPS in 1944. He then enlisted in the Army in 1944 and was discharged in 1946. Very unusual among the CPA jumpers. No record available as to what he did after the war but married, had a son, and lived in Virginia and New Jersey.

He died while living at one of the Del Webb retirement cities in Arizona

Winton Howard Stucky (Cave Junction '43)

Winton died July 18, 1991, in Moundridge, Kansas. He was born August 3, 1916, in a farmhouse near Moundridge. As a young man he was a good enough baseball player to be invited to spring training with the St. Louis Browns. A torn rotator cuff ended his baseball career.

In 1934 he joined his father in the grocery business before moving to Needles, CA, to work for the railroad where he worked his way up to engineer.

Winton was drafted into the Civilian Public Service in 1941 and was accepted into the first group of conscientious objectors to train as smokejumpers in 1943. After his training at Seeley Lake, MT, he was one of the first group of smokejumpers to staff the new base at Cave Junction, OR. He got three fire jumps that season before being injured.

Following his discharge from CPS, he returned to Moundridge and continued in the grocery business retiring in 1977. After a long battle with cancer, he died in 1991.

Francis Keith Utterback (McCall '43)

Keith, 79, died April 24, 1997. He was born October 13, 1917, in Ottumwa, Iowa and was a member of the Brethren Church. He was drafted into Civilian Public Service in 1941 from Chicago where his occupation was listed as Stock Clerk. He worked at a camp in Michigan fighting fires and building roads before being sent to another camp in Waldport, Oregon, doing the same type of work.

In 1943 he was selected for the CPS-103 smokejumper unit in Montana. After training he was sent to McCall for the initial season of that base where he made three fire jumps. In an unusual move for a CPS jumper, he left

public service in 1944 and enlisted in the Army Air Corps. Keith was discharged in 1945.

He married Ester who was an Army Air Corps nurse, had four children and lived in Wheaton, Illinois, for a time. His occupation was listed as carpenter/builder. Keith is buried in Clarendon Hill Cemetery, Darien, Illinois.

William Vincent Wallace (Missoula '43)

Bill died February 15, 1995, in Berkeley, California. He was born November 5, 1912, in San Anselmo, California and was a graduate of the University of Minnesota with a degree in Public Health. Bill also graduated with a degree in Mechanical Engineering from the University of California Berkeley. He was owner of an engineering and contracting firm and an instructor at Contra Costa Community College 1958-76.

Note: not listed in Missoula records but is listed in CPS-103 master files and has a photo of him in his smokejumper outfit. Did he fail to finish training?

Richard S. Weaver (Missoula'43)

Richard died July 27, 2014, of heart failure at age 94. Richard was not a jumper but served as an administrative assistant to the program. He was a pilot and arrived in Missoula with his own open-cockpit, biplane. In his spare time, he gave pilot lessons to some of the jumpers.

His wife, Virginia, served as camp nurse. She is still alive and residing in Sunset Retirement Community. Richard was a Mennonite minister, serving several churches in his day, and retiring in 2003 from Staunton Mennonite Church.

Florence H. Wenger (CPS-103)

Florence is included as her husband, Roy, administered Civilian Public Service Camp 103 at Missoula during the war years 1943-45. She went through smokejumper training but was not allowed to jump—a woman ahead of her time. (Ed.)

“When I retired in 1980, one of my colleagues noted that four was very prominent in my career. I had attended four universities, had taught at four levels, taught at four universities, in four states and on four continents and was retiring after 44 years in education.”

Florence grew up near Toledo, Ohio, and attended small country school. She was feisty—“I received my second spanking in school in the 5th grade

when the boy in from of me turned over my inkwell and ruined my favorite book. I instantly clobbered his towhead with the inky side of the book.”

She attended Bowling Green University for two years and got a teaching certificate. It was in the middle of the Depression and jobs were hard to find. In 1932 at age 18, she was hired to teach first grade at the school she attended at a younger age. Florence attended Ohio State during the summers.

She married Roy Wenger in 1942 and went to Seeley Lake in 1943 where Roy was to be Camp Director for the newly formed CPS-103 smokejumper unit. Florence went through smokejumper training that year.

After the war, she taught at the University of Montana, graduate school at Ohio State, teaching at Ohio State, teaching at the American School in Japan, Akron University, Bowling Green University, Kent State—a career too lengthy to cover here. Florence died December 12, 1989.

Williams Clayton “Bill” Wood (Missoula '43)

Bill died December 17, 2001, in Tigard, Oregon at the age of 79. He was born August 16, 1922, in Missoula, Montana. He attended Roosevelt Grade School and graduated from Missoula County High School in 1940. He played basketball in high school and attended the University of Montana for two years, majoring in wildlife. He was deferred from military service.

In 1942, Bill was working for the U.S. Department of Justice, Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) at Fort Missoula. From 1941 to 1943, 1,200 people of Italian descent were detained at Fort Missoula. Bill would have been one of the INS employees processing and guarding the detainees. In late 1942, Bill started working for the Forest Service and in 1943 he was a smokejumper in Missoula, training at Nine Mile and Seely Lake. In 1943 he was promoted to squadleader, training conscientious objector smokejumper recruits in the techniques of firefighting, and serving as a spotter for their jumps.

Bill continued smokejumping through 1953 and was one of the primary Missoula smokejumpers making rescue jumps. Bill was the “Rescue Foreman” at Missoula. During his 11 years as a smokejumper, he made nine documented rescue jumps, rescuing, and rendering first aid to people who had been injured, usually hunters, in the back country.

On some rescues, Dr. Amos P. Little, a Helena Montana physician who trained in the smokejumping program in 1945, jumped to administer first aid to the most seriously injured. In addition, Bill had at least 18 fire jumps.

Bill was part of a search party to locate a crashed Army B-25 bomber 12 miles southeast of Missoula. The plane crashed on November 30 on Miller Ridge, 1.5 miles east of Miller Peak on the Lolo National Forest. The pilot and two crew members were killed instantly. The pilot, a Missoula native, was coming home on leave and tried to land at Hale field. A low ceiling was reported at the time of the crash. Making the rescue jump with Bill was Dr. Amos Little from the Second Air Force Search and Rescue Division, Great Falls, Montana, and Wag Dodge.

All smokejumpers and Forest Service employees were saddened by the loss of life on the Mann Gulch Fire in 1949. Bill was not directly involved in the fire. However, he asked Smokejumper Foreman Fred Brauer if he should prepare for a rescue mission to Mann Gulch. Fred told Bill that a rescue mission would not be needed.

In 1954, Bill began a career as an Equipment Development Specialist

Floyd F. Yoder (Cave Junction '43)

Floyd, 89, died July 4, 2009, in Iowa City, Iowa. He was born on a family farm April 13, 1920, near Kalona, Iowa into a family of seven children. Floyd graduated from Kalona high school where he played basketball and was all-conference for two years in football in addition to being Junior class president.

Floyd was drafted into Civilian Public Service in 1942 and was in the first group of 60 CPS men to start smokejumper training at Seeley Lake. Floyd then was among the group of 10 that went to Cave Junction, Oregon, to start a new smokejumper base where he jumped for two seasons.

After the war he returned to Kalona and dairy farming which he did for the next 32 years. Floyd was a leader in the Mennonite Church in the Kalona.

Robert Dale Yoder (Missoula '43)

Dale, (61-62), died (body was found) August 8, 1980, in Valdez, Alaska. No details as to why listed like this. He was born December 27, 1917, Aurora, Oregon. Dale was a member of the Mennonite Church and entered Civilian Public Service in 1942 from Hillsboro, Oregon. His occupation at the time was listed as Sheet Metal Worker.

He was first assigned to Camp 21 at Cascade Locks, Oregon, where he did fire suppression and prevention work. From there he went to Camp 31 at Camino, California, a USFS camp, and did more of the same type of work. Dale was well prepared for the 1943 assignment to be trained as a smokejumper. He jumped at Missoula 1943-44 and transferred to Cave Junction, Oregon, for the 1945 season.

Dale was discharged in 1944. He moved to Alaska where his occupation was listed as Teamster truck driver.

Richard S. Zehr (Missoula '43)

Dick, 91, died April 19, 2013, in Flanagan, Illinois. He was born April 28, 1921, on a farm near Flanagan. The family had a 160-acre farm in a Mennonite "work together" community of about 600 people. He attend all grades of school in Flanagan.

Dick entered Civilian Public Service in December 1942 and, after one camp, reported to CPS-103 smokejumper unit where he jumped three seasons before the camp was closed. He then worked one trip on a cattle boat to Europe before his discharge in 1946.

Dick was one of the CPS jumpers who was taught to fly by the Johnson Flying Service Pilots while he was a smokejumper.

After the war he returned to Flanagan and worked as a parts manager for a farm implement company until his retirement in 1983.

Ralph Warren Ziegler (Missoula '43)

Ralph, 83, died August 21, 1999, in Elgin, Illinois. He was born September 12, 1915, in Elgin and graduated from Elgin H.S. in 1935. Ralph married Dorothy Everidge on January 6, 1950, in Winston-Salem, N.C. Ralph was drafted into Civilian Public Service in 1941 and was discharged in 1945. He was from the Brethren faith and his occupation at the time was listed as "book binder." Ralph jumped at Missoula during the 1943 season and is buried in the Fraternity Church of the Brethren Cemetery in Winston-Salem, N.C.

Loren L. Zimmerman (Missoula '43)

Loren died May 12, 2002, in Gridley, IL. He was born January 12, 1917, near Flanagan, IL. He worked at the family farm until he was 21 and then went to an electrician school in Chicago. "The neighbors were getting electricity for the first time, so I was in business." He was a member of the Mennonite Church and was drafted into the Civilian Public Service in 1941.

Loren was among the first CPS men to become smokejumpers and he jumped all three years (43-45) of the program. His brother, Merlo, was also a smokejumper. Loren, along with Phil Stanley and Dave Flaccus were the first CPS men to make a fire jump. After his discharge, Loren returned to Gridley and resumed his business as an electrical contractor.

