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## Smokejumper biographies for 1944 rookie class, P - Z

National Smokejumper Association

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## **1944 Smokejumper Rookies**

Painter through Zook

### **Robert H. “Bob” Painter (Cave Junction '44)**

Bob died January 28, 2015, in Grant Michigan at the age of 93. His family of Quaker heritage, were recruited by William Penn in 1699 and came to the U.S. His father was a pastor of a Friends Meeting in South Starksboro, Vermont, when Bob was born.

He grew up in Putney, VT, but was sent to boarding school in Philadelphia when his mother died when Bob was twelve. After graduation from high school, he went to Earlham College in Richmond, Indiana, where he played football for four years and was accepted to Western Reserve Medical School. He refused to take a military commission and lost his place at the medical school.

Bob was drafted into the Civilian Public Service in 1943 and reported for smokejumper training in 1944. “The morale at this camp was upbeat.” After smokejumper training in Missoula, he joined the jumpers at Cave Junction where he chalked up 15 jumps, the most memorable being north of Lake Chelan, WA. Bob returned and jumped the 1945 season at McCall.

After discharge in 1946, he completed Medical School in Philadelphia in 1950. He and another physician started a medical practice in Minnesota. Then from 1957 to 1973, he practiced in a rural clinic in Grant, Michigan. In 1973 he “shifted gears” and switched to Anesthesiology.

Bob practiced until 1987 in several rural towns in Michigan. In addition to his medical practice, he served on the town council, as a Trustee at the local Community College.

“My patients are my friends. There is something of God in every person.”

### **Arthur C. Penner (Cave Junction '44)**

Arthur died February 16, 2013, in Weatherford, Oklahoma. He was drafted into Civilian Public Service in 1942 from Cordell, Oklahoma, where his occupation was listed as Farmer. He was a member of the CPS-103 smokejumpers during WWII and jumped at Cave Junction in 1944 and at North Cascades in 1945. He was a bricklayer after the war and a member of the Mennonite Brethren Church.

### **Raymond Curtis Phibbs (Missoula '44)**

Ray, 59, died February 5, 1985, in Lancaster, PA, of an immune system disease. He was born March 26, 1925, in Pulaski, Virginia, into a family with five other siblings. After graduating from Pulaski H.S. in 1943, he went into the Civilian Public Service and was at two camps before joining the CPS-103 smokejumpers at Missoula for the 1944-45 seasons. Leaving the smokejumpers, he made three trips on the cattle ships taking livestock to Europe before his discharge in 1946.

Ray entered Bridgewater College, a small Brethren College, where graduated in 1950. He was editor of the yearbook and student body President while in school. He taught school for two years before taking a job as Supt. of Building and Grounds at Bridgewater College.

In 1955 he was awarded a Rockefeller Fellowship to study Theology and entered Yale Divinity School where he graduated in 1959 and took a Pastoral job in Goshen, Connecticut. He pastored for nine years during which time he founded a Torrington Area Interfaith Commission on Labor-Management Relations.

From 1967-79, Ray was senior pastor for the United Church of Christ (UCC) in Hudson, Ohio, before moving to Brewer, Maine, where he served until 1982. Ray developed an immune system disease in 1982 just before returning to Lancaster UCC Seminary to work on his Doctor of Ministry Degree.

In his bio. Ray's wife said of him, "Throughout his life, he dared to stand against injustice, poverty, bigotry and the prejudices which dehumanize people."

### **Gregg L. Phifer** (Missoula '44)

Gregg, 87, a retired professor of communications at Florida State University, died June 2, 2005. He was born May 17, 1918, in Cincinnati, Ohio, the son of the editor of publications for the Methodist Book Concern. Gregg lettered in Track & Field for three years in high school and headed west to College of the Pacific in Stockton, CA.

He was on the debate team for four years, lettered in Track & Field placing in the conference meet and was editor of the school newspaper. Gregg graduated with honors with a double major in history and public speaking and received a scholarship for graduate work at the University of Iowa in 1940. He received his master's Degree the summer of '41 and secured a teaching position that fall.

Gregg was drafted into Civilian Public Service and worked at several camps before being selected for the smokejumper unit at Missoula in 1944. "We reported to the base camp at Nine Mile. Many prospective jumpers

were hardened Mennonite farm boys.” He had three fire jumps in 1943 and seven in 1945.

After the war Gregg got a teaching position at Baldwin-Wallace College in Ohio followed by a position at Iowa where he earned his doctorate degree. From there he went to a position at Florida State University where he spent the rest of his career teaching for 45 years. He served on many national committees on parliamentary law.

Going back to his days as a Track & Field athlete, Gregg became a Nationally rated Track & Field official working two national and one international championship. He specialized in the long and triple jumps.

Gregg was an NSA Life Member.

### **George W. “Walter” Pursley (Missoula '44)**

Walter died December 17, 2015, in Fort Meyers, Florida. He was born March 8, 1925, in Irvington, N.J. and moved to Milburn (NJ) at an early age. Walter was a member of the Christadelphian faith and entered Civilian Public Service in 1943. He was assigned to several camps before reporting to CPS-103 for smokejumper training. Walter jumped the 1944 season and made seven training and two fire jumps.

After his discharge in 1946, he attended and graduated with a university degree in Business. Walter worked for Chubb & Son Insurance Co. for his entire career and retired to Fort Meyers in 2000.

### **Leonard Glenn Raney (Missoula '44)**

Leonard died May 5, 2011. He was born July 24, 1919, in Lame Deer, Montana. Leonard was a member of the Pentecostal Church and was drafted into Civilian Public Service in 1943 from Seminole, Oklahoma. He was trained as a smokejumper during the 1944 season and made nine training and three fire jumps.

Leonard’s employment is listed as “worked in Surface Combustion Industry as a Sheer Operator.” He is also listed as Rev. L.G. Raney so could have held full-time job and was also a Pentecostal Minister. Leonard is buried in Holland, Ohio.

### **Walter B. Reimer (Missoula '44)**

Walter was born on February 18, 1920, near Hillsboro, Kansas, and died October 29, 2016. He was a member of the Alexanderwohl Mennonite Church near Goessel, Kansas. He attended a one-room school through 8th grade, after which he helped on the family farm until he was drafted at the

end of 1942 to serve in World War II. He chose to serve in the Civilian Public Service (CPS).

While in CPS, he was sent to Nebraska, Oregon, California, Montana, and Iowa to perform different duties. He worked for the Bureau of Reclamation building a dam for irrigation in Oregon, the National Park Services in California, and, finally, as a smokejumper with the USFS in Missoula, Montana. Walt had 21 jumps during the 1944-45 seasons.

After being discharged from CPS in April 1946, Walt went to Eastern Washington to work wheat harvest on the Julius Franz Farm. He became a member of the Menno Mennonite Church of Ritzville. There, he served as deacon and as Menno's representative on the original Camrec (Washington Mennonite Fellowship Retreat Ground) building committee.

In 1985, Walt retired and moved with his wife to Moses Lake, WA, and in 2009, they moved to Kidron Retirement Village in Newton, Kansas.

During his retirement, he set up a woodworking shop in his basement and created numerous beautiful pieces, many of which were prized donations at the Mennonite Country Auction. He also gifted many of his wood creations to family and friends.

### **Michael Erwin Ritzman Jr. (McCall '44)**

Michael died May 19, 2014, in Coatsville, Pennsylvania. He was born in Changsha, China, on September 23, 1918, where his father was a missionary. They returned to the U.S. (Gratz, Pennsylvania) in May 1922 when Michael was age three. Michael graduated from HS in nearby Reading, PA, where his father (PhD) was a professor at Albright College. He graduated from Maryville College, Maryville, Tennessee and later did post grad work in Personnel Administration at Yale, Cornell, and the University of Pennsylvania.

In October 1940, Michael was working for the Boy Scouts of America in Washington, PA, near Pittsburgh, when he filled out his WWII Draft Card. He entered the Civilian Public Service in June 1942, listing his employment as "Real Estate Dealer."

Mike jumped at McCall during the 1944 season and had nine practice jumps. He broke his ankle on his last practice jump ending his smokejumping career.

Michael's working career was for the YMCA, primarily in New York and Pennsylvania, retiring in January 1973 as the Executive Director of the YMCA in Chester, PA. The newspaper article written upon his retirement noted that he had a 25-year career with the YMCA and was a "Mild mannered man." He then worked part time as a Tax Consultant for the Tax

Corporation of New York. By 2000 he and his wife, Genevieve, had moved to a large retirement living community near Coatsville, PA.

Both Michael and Genevieve were lifelong active Pacifists and anti-war activists, supporting organizations institutions with similar beliefs. He and Genevieve loved to dance and travelled extensively to square dance exhibitions.

### **George H. Robinson** (Missoula '44)

"Hade" died May 9, 2008, at his home in Ocean City, N.J. He was born August 1, 1920, in Seaville, NJ. He was an NSA member and jumped at Missoula 1944-45. He was an active jumper making at least five fire jumps during the slow 1944 season and at least three during the busy 1945 season. Many of the 1945 records are listed as "no name given."

Hade was an active member of the Calvary Baptist Church in Ocean View. He was the fire chief of the local volunteer fire department for 44 years and a builder of custom homes by trade. Hade is buried at the Calvary Baptist Church Cemetery in Ocean View.

### **Charles Parr Rogers** (Missoula '44)

Charles died February 8, 1999. He was born July 30, 1912, in Trenton, New Jersey. Charles was a member of the Quaker faith and was drafted into Civilian Public Service in 1943 from Trenton where his occupation was listed as "Procedure Analyst." He jumped the 1944 season at Missoula and had eight training jumps. According to base records, he fractured his skull while working on a hay stacker doing project work.

After his release from CPS in 1946 he returned to New York where he earned his bachelor's degree from New York University. Charles worked for Metropolitan Life Insurance as a Compensation Consultant Supervisor. He is buried in Ewing, New Jersey.

### **Hubert O. Rohrer** (Missoula '44)

Hubert, 91, died June 20, 2011, in North Vernon, Indiana. He was born in 1919 and was a member of the Methodist Church. Hubert entered Civilian Public Service in 1942 from Collins, Colorado. He jumped at Missoula both the 1944 and '45 seasons getting nine training and three fire jumps in 1944. Hubert broke his leg on the Kent Peak Fire in 1945 after getting three training and three fire jumps.

He attended Kansas Wesleyan University, and after graduation moved to Key West, Florida, to work for the Public Health Service to control mosquitoes carrying yellow and dengue fevers. He then worked for the

American Friends Service Relief Committee, organizing European relief efforts following the war. Hubert taught English and journalism at Seymour High School for 27 years until retiring in 1984.

### **Laurel Robert Sargent (McCall '44)**

Laurel, 78, of Ransom, Kansas, died in Great Bend, Kansas, August 11, 2000. He was born April 8, 1922, near Brownell, Kansas. The Depression provide hard times. Laurel went to a one-room school in Ash Grove, KS, where he graduated in 1935. "School was an abject boredom for me." Even at that, he finished at the top of his class. "My idea of a perfect day would be to stay at home and work the crosscut saw." He graduated from high school in 1939 and enrolled in Fort Hays State College.

Laurel registered for the draft on June 30, 1942, at age 20. As a member of one of the Peace Churches he was eligible for Civilian Public Service and served as a CPS smokejumper at McCall during the fire seasons of 1944-45. He made two fire jumps in 1944 and seven during the 1945 season. He married in 1955. Laurel's life was in and around the small farming and ranching community of Ransom, Kansas. He is buried in the Ransom Cemetery.

### **Karl Schmidt (Missoula '44)**

Any information of Karl has been almost impossible to find. He was not a member of the Civilian Public Service group as a single entry in the Missoula jump records states "ex-Army paratrooper." Karl got nine practice and three fire jumps that season. He just jumped during the 1944 season.

A CPS bio on the Eastern Washington University website indicates that he was a spotter in '44, even though it was his first year as a smokejumper. That supports the information that he was a former "paratrooper." The same story says he "led calisthenics" for the '44 guys. Perhaps he was selected for that because he was older and had military jumping experience.

### **Charles E. Schumacher (Missoula '44)**

Charles, 92, of Snohomish, Washington, died on March 17, 2012. He was born September 4, 1919, in Bluffton, Ohio, where he graduated from the Bluffton High School before attending Bluffton College and the University of Cincinnati where, in 1943, he graduated with a degree in Chemical Engineering.

He registered for the draft on October 16, 1940, and, as a member of one of the Peace Churches, he was in the Civilian Public Service during WWII.

Charles jumped at Missoula for two seasons and had 21 jumps. After his release he worked one tour on the “cattle boats” bringing livestock to Poland.

His first job was with Firestone in Akron, Ohio, where he also got his master’s degree at the University of Akron. From there he moved to California to work for Bechtel for the next 35 years spending time in Australia, England, and Saudi Arabia. Charles was later hired out of retirement to work on a master plan for utilization of the world’s largest gas fields in Qatar.

He is buried at the Floral Hills Cemetery in Lynnwood, Washington

### **Chester Howard Schwartz** (McCall '44)

Chet died February 20, 2006. He was born November 12, 1918, in Berne, Indiana. He was drafted into Civilian Public Service from Columbus, Ohio, in 1941 and was a member of the Mennonite faith. His occupation at the time was listed as “Salesman.”

Chet jumped the 1944 season at McCall and had two fire jumps in addition to his training jumps.

### **John E. Scott** (Missoula '44)

John died April 14, 2006, in Fergus Falls, Minnesota. He was born in 1915 and a member of the Presbyterian Church when he was drafted into Civilian Public Service from Fergus Falls in 1943. His occupation at that time was listed as Farmer.

He was a CPS-103 jumper and was at Missoula for the 1944 and 1945 seasons. John had seven training and four fire jumps in 1944 and two training and four fire jumps in the 1945 season. He was discharged in December 1945.

After his discharge, John farmed and worked as a ranch hand in Minnesota. He enjoyed deer hunting making his last hunt in November at age 89.

### **Lowell Victor Sharpes** (Missoula '44)

Lowell Victor Sharpes, Jr., 88, of Boonsboro, MD, died February 11, 2013, at Meritus Medical Center in Hagerstown, MD. He was born May 10, 1924, near Harrisonburg, VA. Lowell graduated from Harrisonburg High School and attended Bridgewater College 1941-43. He entered Civilian Public Service in April of 1943.



Lowell jumped at Missoula during the 1944-45 seasons making 21 jumps and later making three voyages to Europe as a sea cowboy for Heifer Project. He was discharged the summer of 1946.

“I retired at age 65 from Holly farms, a poultry contracting complex, after 42 years.” Lowell was a member of the Church of the Brethren, where he enjoyed teaching the adult Sunday school class.

### **Marlyn Duane Shetler** (Missoula '44)

Marlyn, 92, died in Meadville, Pennsylvania, on December 12, 2016. He was born in Havelock, Iowa, on August 5, 1924. The family moved to Pennsylvania where Marlyn attended high school.

He registered for the draft at age 18 in December 1942. As a member of the Mennonite Church, he served his country through the Civilian Public Service program during WWII. During this time, he jumped from Missoula during the 1944-45 fire seasons. Following his service, he returned to Cochran, Pennsylvania area where he lived the remainder of his life.

### **John Robert Shipp** (Missoula '44)

John, 76, died October 27, 1999, at his home in Rockingham County, Virginia. He was born May 27, 1923, in Harrisonburg, Virginia. He was a member of the Brethren Church and entered Civilian Public Service in 1943. His occupation at that time was listed as “Farmer.”

John trained as a smokejumper in 1944 and jumped both the 1944 and 1945 seasons. He had a busy season in 1944 making seven training and six fire jumps. John followed that with another season in 1945 where he made three practice, seven fire and one rescue jump.

After his discharge from CPS, John returned to the Harrisonburg and continued farming for the rest of his life.

### **Paul C. Shrock** (Missoula '44)

Paul died April 25, 2008, in Goshen, Indiana. He was a member of the Mennonite Church and was drafted into Civilian Public Service from Odon, Indiana, in 1943. His occupation at that time was listed as Farmer/Carpenter. He joined the smokejumper unit in Montana for the 1944 season and got 10 practice and two fire jumps that year.

After the war he lived in Elkhart, Indiana, where he was self-employed listing his occupation as part time maintenance and welder foreman in a factory. Paul was active in the local Mennonite Church as a teacher and working with the boy's club.

### **Bradshaw Snipes** (Missoula '44)

Bradshaw died May 28, 2008, in Falls Township, Pennsylvania. He was a ninth-generation Quaker dating back to a 1685 purchase of land from William Penn by his ancestors. Throughout his early years he was involved in work with minority groups and the poor.

He entered Guilford College in North Carolina in 1941 where he played football and was V.P. of the freshman class. "The tough football players were hostile and bigoted toward other conscientious objectors but remained friendly to me."

Brad reported to the CPS-103 smokejumper unit in 1944. An injury on a winter work crew prevented him from jumping the 1945 season which he spent as a lookout. In 1946 he worked four trips to Europe on the relief boats to Poland and Germany. He was also active in the American Friends Service relief efforts in Finland.

He graduated from Guilford College in 1948 with a bachelor's degree and later with a master's in History from Haverford College.

Brad moved back to the family farm and developed his family's tree and nursery business. "Thirty-seven years later Snipes Farm and Nursery is rated among the top 100 garden centers in the U.S." He was President of the Pennsylvania Nurseryman's Association in 1989.

### **James Abraham Spangler** (Missoula '44)

Jim, 64, died June 26, 1986, in Floyd County, Virginia. He was born March 28, 1922, also in Floyd County. He was a member of the Brethren Church and drafted into Civilian Public Service in 1943. His occupation at that time was listed as "Farmer." He joined the smokejumper unit and jumped the 1944 and 1945 seasons. Jim made eight practice and four fire jumps during the 1944 season and three practice and six fire jumps during the '45 season. After his discharge he returned to farming in Virginia.

### **Kolmer Benjamin Spangler** (Missoula '44)

Bennie died October 31, 1999, in Midothian, Virginia. He was born on July 28, 1923, near Roanoke, VA. His father was a Postal Service employee and Bennie graduated from HS in Salem, Virginia, which is near Roanoke. He was a member of the Brethren Church and entered Civilian Public Service in May 1943.

Bennie served in two different CPS camps before volunteering for the smokejumper unit. He jumped had eight training and one practice jump in 1944 and four practice and three fire jumps in 1945.

When released from CPS in 1946, Bennie completed his advanced education, graduating about 1948 from Bridgeport University, Bridgeport, Virginia, which is a liberal arts college traditionally affiliated with the Church of Brethren. The 1947 yearbook describes him as a “fun lover” and having “a smile for everyone.”

A 1948 city directory for Roanoke listed his employment as a Clerk for Dillard Paper Company. The company was, at the time, one of the biggest paper distributors in the country. In the early 1950s he moved to Knoxville, Tennessee. He is buried in Sherwood Burial Park, Salem, Virginia.

### **Ralph Spicer** (Missoula '44)

Ralph died August 7, 1952, when he was struck by a car while working as an engineer on a city water project in Cleveland, Ohio. While standing in the middle of the road with his crew, he was struck from behind by a car. The driver explained that he became distracted when his sunglasses fell off. Ralph was born June 18, 1922, in Philadelphia, the son of a bricklayer. He first attended Earlham College in Indiana and later graduated from Penn State University.

Ralph had Quaker values and was drafted into Civilian Public Service in 1943 and his occupation at that time was listed as Mechanical draftsman. He joined CPS-103 for smokejumper training in 1944. Ralph had eight training and four fire jumps during the 1944 season and three training, five fire and one rescue jump in the 1945 season.

As did many of the CPS men, Ralph worked on one of the “cattle boat” trips to Poland as part of the post-war relief help to war-ravaged Europe. He met and married Inge Hellwing in Poland. CPS notes say she was “smuggled” back to the U.S. on the “cattle boat.” Ralph is buried in Alger Cemetery in Cleveland.

### **Earl W. Stutzman** (McCall '44)

Earl died April 25, 2004. He was born March 30, 1920, in Kokomo, Indiana. He grew up in Indiana and Michigan. In 1938 the family moved to Harrisburg, OR, and Earl was established in farming by 1941 when he was called into Civilian Public Service.

Earl was accepted to the smokejumper program and jumped at McCall during the 1944 and '45 seasons. He had three fire jumps in 1944 and seven during the '45 season to go with 11 practice jumps.

After his release from CPS, he went back to farming in Albany, Oregon, raising grass seed.

**Alfred Jacob Thiessen** (Missoula '44)

Alfred, 90, died in Dallas, TX, on June 24, 2008. He was born in Butler County, Kansas, on June 18, 1918. As a member of one of the Peace Churches, he entered the Civilian Public Service and jumped from Missoula during the 1944-45 fire seasons. Following his CPS service, he returned to Kansas where he farmed. He is buried at the Gnadenau Cemetery in Hillsboro, Kansas.

**Harold J. Toews** (Missoula '44)

Harold, 78, died on April 16, 2001, in Olympia, Wash. He was born April 9, 1923, in Frazer, Montana.

Harold was a Civilian Public Service jumper in Missoula during the 1944 and '45 season. He lived in Lustre, Montana, for many years where he farmed over 2000 acres and was on several school boards and an active member of the Lustre Mennonite Brethren Church. Harold is survived by Lillian, his wife of 52 years. He is buried at the Lustre Mennonite Brethren Cemetery.

**Edwin A. Vail** (Missoula '44)

Edwin, 83, died September 19, 2002. He was born May 31, 1919, at home in Media, Pennsylvania, into a Quaker family. The family moved to California by the time he was two. They lived in Altadena where he graduated from high school and enrolled in Whittier College before being drafted into Civilian Public Service in 1941. He was only one semester away from graduation at the time.

He was accepted by the smokejumper unit and reported to Nine Mile in May of 1944 where he jumped for two seasons. "The 1945 season was very busy—I had eight fire jumps that season."

After his discharge in 1945, he did various labor jobs for eight or nine years before deciding to go into the printing business, his favorite subject in high school. He did two years of work in the field and contact ex-CPS smokejumper, Dave Flaccus, in Missoula. He worked for Flaccus and Montana Press for over eleven years before moving to Olympia, WA.

**Cornelius W. Vogt** (McCall '44)

Cornelius died November 10, 1989, in Redwood City, CA. He was born in 1924 and a member of the Mennonite Church and drafted into Civilian Public Service in 1943 from Hillsboro, KS, where his occupation was listed as Student. He jumped at McCall during the 1944 season and got three fire

jumps in addition to his seven training jumps. No record can be found after he left CPS.

### **Harvey Henry Weirich (McCall '44)**

Harvey, 86, died February 16, 2010, at his home in Goshen, Indiana. He was born February 13, 1924 and was a member of the Mennonite Church. Harvey was drafted into Civilian Public Service in 1943 from Middlebury, Indiana. His occupation at the time was listed as Carpenter.

After training, Harvey was assigned to the McCall unit where he jumped the 1944 and '45 seasons. He had three fire jumps in 1944 and six in 1945.

After the war he worked in the boating industry for 60 years, over 38 with Starcraft Marine of Goshen where was Vice President and in charge of design and engineering of Starcraft aluminum and fiberglass boats.

### **Gilbert Ray Weldy (McCall '44)**

Gilbert, 84, died December 20, 2008, in Fort Wayne, Indiana. He was born October 3, 1924 and was a member of the Brethren Church. Gil was drafted into Civilian Public Service in 1943 from Elkhart, Indiana, where his occupation was listed as a student. He jumped at McCall during the 1944-45 seasons and got seven fire jumps in addition to his training jumps.

He graduated from Manchester College in 1949 and got his master's and doctorate from Indiana University. Gilbert was a high school principal and assistant school superintendent for 30 years and taught at Kent State University.

### **J. Eldon Whitesitt (McCall '44)**

Eldon, 97, died May 24, 2019, in Newport, Oregon. He was born January 15, 1922, in Stevensville, Montana and was a member of the Methodist Church. He attended both grade school and high school in Stevensville and then attended the University of Montana in Missoula and Montana State in Bozeman.

As a young man, he served as a minister in four small Methodist churches in Western Montana and Bozeman.

Eldon was drafted from Stevensville into Civilian Public Service in 1943 and trained as a smokejumper in 1944. His occupation at the time he entered CPS was listed as "Math Professor." He was stationed at McCall and had three fire jumps in 1944 and five in 1945.

After his discharge from CPS, he continued his education earning a master's and his Ph.D. from the University of Illinois. Eldon was a professor of Mathematics at Montana State University in Bozeman during the

duration of his career. He authored college level texts: *Boolean Algebra* and *Modern Algebra for Elementary Teachers*.

**Merlo M. Zimmerman** (McCall '44)

Merlo, 83, died September 5, 2002, in a farm accident when his tractor overturned near Gridley, Illinois. He was born, one of four boys, on his family farm September 10, 1918, near Flanagan, Illinois. Merlo attend a one-room school through the 8<sup>th</sup> grade and graduated from a high school with 125 students and three teachers. The family was very active in the Mennonite Church.

Merlo was drafted into Civilian Public Service in October 1941, two months before the start of WWII for the U.S. He joined the CPS-103 smokejumper unit in 1944 and jumped at McCall for two seasons. He had always wanted to fly, and it happened at McCall when he was instructed by Johnson pilots Warren Ellison, Bob Fogg, and Bill Yaggy. "The day that Bob Fogg crawled out of that plane at McCall and said 'take 'er up,' was a mighty exciting day." He had three fire jumps in 1944 and seven during the busy 1945 season.

After his discharge in 1946, Merlo and another jumper, Les Gahler, made one of the boat trips to Europe taking horses and cattle to war ravished Poland.

Merlo returned to the family farm and worked it until his retirement in 1983, "although I'm still involved assisting my sone who replaced me."

Beside farming, Merlo was involved in the Mennonite Central Committee for 20 years and has served on many boards involving groups that give aid to people in need.

**Samuel E. Zook** (Missoula '44)

Sam,72, died July 14, 1983, in Sweet Home, Oregon. He was born December 28,1910 and was a member of the Mennonite Church. Sam was drafted into Civilian Public Service in 1942 from Sweet Home and his occupation at that time was listed as Logger.

Sam jumped at Missoula during the 1944 and 1945 seasons getting 10 practice and three fire jumps in 1944 and three practice and two fire jumps in 1945.

Sam left CPS in 1945 and returned to logging where he lost a leg in a 1962 accident.

