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Smokejumper biographies for 1946 rookie class, K - P

National Smokejumper Association

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1946 Smokejumper Rookies

Lee Kahler (North Cascades '46)

Lee died October 1, 1984, in Chelan, Washington. He was born November 14, 1914, in Winthrop, Washington. He and worked at Boeing in Seattle until his retirement. He and his wife lived in Chelan after his retirement until his death. Lee was another one of the jumpers who were interviewed by the FBI in the D.B. Cooper case. He jumped at NCSB 1946, 48-49.

Walter Forrest "Walt" Kramis (Missoula '46)

Walt was born on June 2, 1928, in Missoula, Montana. He died of cancer on October 10, 1990, in his hometown at the age of 62, and was buried there. Walt was a student at the University of Montana in 1948. He is listed as being an Engineer and working in a hardware store and completing four years of college. He jumped at Missoula 1946-47.

Herb Krissie (Cave Junction '46)

Herb died October 6, 2009, at his home in Medford, Oregon. He was born in Alberta, Canada, and served in the US Army. After getting out of the service Herb jumped at Cave Junction for four seasons through 1949.

Leonard Francis Krout (Missoula '46)

Leonard died of lung cancer April 17, 1992, in Missoula. He was born August 8, 1926, in Missoula where he graduated from high school. He attended the University of Montana and rookied in 1946. He retired in 1976 as superintendent of the smokejumper center at Missoula. He jumped at Missoula 1946-48, 51-66, 73-74.

Edmund Ladendorff (Missoula '46)

Ed, 84, of San Antonio, Texas, died December 1, 2009. During high school Ed worked for the Forest Service on a road construction crew. When WWII came along, he joined the Army Air Corps serving from 1943-1945. During those two years he was stationed in England and piloted 29 missions in B-17s.

After returning home, Ed was looking for a summer job and there were openings in the smokejumper program. He had enough of airplanes and turned down the position until his buddy, John Frankovich (MSO-46), talked him into it. Smokejumper money allowed him to go to college in the winter.

He jumped 1946-49 while going to college. Ed received his business degree from the University of Oregon (1949) and later his M.B.A. (1951) from Harvard Business School. Ed retired in 1990 from Thomas J. Lipton (Lipton Tea Co) where he was vice president in charge of the Beverage Division.

For a short time after that, he taught at New York University and then moved to San Antonio, Texas

Wilford C. “Jack” Larson (North Cascades '46)

Jack, 95, died September 11, 2020. He was born June 25, 1925, in Ferndale, Washington. At age 17, Jack enlisted in the US Army during WW11 and served as a paratrooper in the 17th Airborne Division. He saw combat in the Battle of the Bulge and Operation Varsity, the jump on the Rhine that remains the largest airborne operation in military history. Jack received the Purple Heart for wounds suffered and was awarded the Bronze Star for gallantry.

Unable to find work when he returned home, Jack hitchhiked to Winthrop, Washington, where he found work as a smokejumper, working for pioneer smokejumper Francis Lufkin. Jack jumped at NCSB 1946-47. He moved to Bremerton, WA, in 1961 and became self-employed at a land developer.

Joseph Elie Lavoie (Missoula '46)

Joe, 59, died October 16, 1988, in Missoula, Montana. He was born July 29, 1929. His occupation was listed as Restaurant “Owner/Operator.” Yearbooks show him in Missoula Country H.S. in 1948 with further records showing two years of college. He jumped the 1946-47 seasons.

Clarence Edwin Lockart (McCall '46)

Ed, 54, died June 19, 1979, in Bozeman, Montana. He was born in Idaho December 27, 1924, in McCall, Idaho. He married Joan Harvey in Boise August 22, 1947. His occupation at time of death is listed as “logger” and he was living in Gallatin, Montana. He jumped at McCall during the 1946-47 seasons.

Lester Lycklama (McCall '46)

Lester was born January 11, 1923, in Harrison, South Dakota. He died July 5, 1946, at age 23 and is buried in Meridian, Idaho. Lester was the second smokejumper (after Malvin Brown Triple Nickle) to die in the line of duty when hit by a falling snag on a fire jumped out of McCall in 1946. He had enlisted in the Army April 1, 1941.

John Raymond “Jack” Lyman (Missoula '46)

Jack was born June 14, 1920, in Baker, Montana, and died June 5, 1996, in Colville, Washington. He served in the Army for two years prior to WWII and was working for the railroad when he enlisted in February 1942 after the start of WWII. Jack was in the 82nd Airborne with the rank of 1st Sgt.

Records show him at the University of Montana during 1947-48 where he graduated with a degree in Forestry, and he worked for the Forest Service until retirement in 1975. He was a 31-year resident of Coville and is buried at the Mountain View Park Cemetery in Coville.

He jumped at Missoula during the 1946 season and had seven training and three fire jumps.

Steven E. Maciag (Missoula '46)

Steve, 83, died October 15, 2005, in Silver Bow, Montana. He was born January 3, 1922, in West Rutland, Vermont and graduated from high school in 1940. Steve served in the US Army's 517th Airborne Division during WWII as 1st Lt. He was awarded a Purple Heart and retired as a decorated Lt. Col. In the Army Reserve.

Following his time in the military Steve moved to Montana and joined the smokejumpers during the summers of 1946-48. While in Montana he married and he and his wife moved to Richmond, Virginia, where he earned a B.A. from William and Mary College. They returned to Montana and Steve taught and served with the Job Corps for 30 years, traveling extensively and touching the lives of many until retirement. He is buried at the New Hill Cemetery at Anaconda, Montana.

Robert W. “Bob” Manchester (Missoula '46)

On Thursday, Oct. 28, 1999, we lost a husband and companion, a father, a good friend, a skier, a soldier. Robert W. Manchester passed quietly surrounded by his family and friends, and the caring staff of the Missoula Hospice House. Bob was born June 21, 1919, on a farm near Preble, N.Y., to Nellie E. Rowland Manchester and Henry L. Manchester. He attended schools at Bromley, Preble, Tully and Syracuse, N.Y., and graduated from Mount Herman Prep School, Massachusetts in 1937.

After graduating from Mount Herman, Bob moved to Missoula to pursue both a college education and his passion for alpine skiing. He attended the University of Montana one year as a Sigma Phi Epsilon pledge. Bob then became instrumental in organizing ski trains from Missoula, each carrying about 300 people up the Blackfoot. It was only natural during this time

(1937-42) that he met Jan Boissevain (owner and operator of the Double Arrow Dude Ranch) and through this friendship started one of Montana's first ski areas at the Double Arrow. He worked there until April 1942.

Bob enlisted in the Tenth Mountain Infantry, an elite highly trained Army division at the age of 22. In 1942, he was selected for the Columbia Icefield Expedition in Canada and later that year assigned to K Company, 87th Regiment at Camp Hale, Colo. He took part in the amphibious landing in the attack of Kiska in the Aleutian Islands of Alaska in 1943. He was promoted to platoon sergeant during his tour of duty in Italy in 1945 and was awarded the Silver Star, the Bronze Star, and the Purple Heart. Later in 1945, he was selected to accompany the Brazilian Expeditionary Force to Brazil. He was discharged Nov. 2, 1945, with the rank of Technical Sergeant.

Bob returned to U of M to complete his college education and earned a degree in geology and was a member of the U of M Ski Team. He completed one year of graduate studies at Syracuse University. Bob was a smokejumper with the U.S. Forest Service from 1946-53 and continued with the Forest Service with a career in the minerals and geology branch for the Northern Region and retiring as branch chief in 1980. In 1951, he married Joanne Wold of Alexander, N.D., a teacher in Missoula. They built a home in Target Range area and a second Mountain House at Big Mountain, near Whitefish, where he first skied during Christmas 1937. Their three sons all participated in the ski racing program at Big Mountain. Bob served on the board of directors of the Alpinglow Inn at Big Mountain for the last 10 years.

After Bob retired from the Forest Service, he devoted much of his time to developing friendships with members of the Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes. During his work at the Double Arrow Ranch, he became close friends with several tribal members. Bob captured the spirit of these relationships using photography. His pictures documented the cultural events and life of these people. He willingly shared these pictures and gave encouragement to the younger generation to continue their education. Through sharing his knowledge and compassion, he became known to them as "Grandpa Bob." Bob is survived by his wife, Joanne.

Ramon J. "Ray" Mansidor (McCall '46)

Ray, 95, died March 11, 2020. He graduated from Homedale (ID) High School in 1942 and went into the US Army in 1944. Ray trained flight engineers, pilots, and Co-pilots on bombers at Williams Field, Chandler, AZ, until the end of the war.

Ray went to Washington State for two semesters before returning to McCall where he jumped the 1946-47 seasons. In 1956 he came back to Homedale to help on the family farm where he has been since that time. Ray was an accomplished pilot and was instrumental in the creation and development of the Homedale Municipal Airport.

In 2020, in recognition of 60 years of service, the Owyhee Co. Soil and Water District renamed their "Conservationist of the Year" award the "Ray Mansidor Conservationist of the Year" award.

Cliff Marshall (Cave Junction '46)

Cliff died in 1994, date unknown. In 1946 Cliff, who was the first jumper to report for duty at Cave Junction, was a Master Sergeant in the Paratroopers. He was active in combat jumps over Normandy and Holland. Cliff was also assigned to ground action in the Battle of the Bulge. The 1946 crew at Cave Junction were all veterans of WWII with most of them having been paratroopers.

In 1947 Cliff became the foreman in charge of the base. From WWII Marine Dick Courson (CJ-46): "Cliff Marshall left CJ in July of 1953. He went to the Parachute Development Center in El Centro, CA. I did find out he was working on the reentry systems for our space program and that he was instrumental in parachute reentry from outer space."

From research done by Fred Cooper (NCSB-62): "Information from The Redlands Daily Facts in Redlands, CA for May 1960. Cliff was the Chief Engineer for the 6511 Parachute Test Group in El Centro, CA. They set a record dropping a 35,000-pound bundle of cargo from a C-130 plane. (The old record was 31,000 pounds by the Royal Air Force.) The drop used six-100-foot chutes and was made from 5,000 feet. This must have been associated with his testing for the space shuttle reentry program. The first suborbital launch was in May 1961, one year after the test in the news article."

Joe M. "Pipas" Martinez (Missoula '46)

Joe, 90, died December 23, 2014, in New Mexico. He was born May 16, 1924, in Albuquerque, N.M. Joe was sent overseas to fight in the Pacific against the Japanese in World War II with the Air National Guard. After completing 29 successful bombings without injury, he earned the Distinguished Flying Medal, went to the University of Montana to complete his undergraduate studies.

Joe returned to his native New Mexico to Santa Fe in early 1952 and started teaching Science and Biology at the Española Municipal Schools in

1953, was promoted to Principal in 1966 and stayed until he retired in 1983. Joe was recognized by Mayor Larry A. Delgado with a certificate proclaiming May 16, 2004, to be Joe "Pipas" Martinez Day in Santa Fe for his undying commitment to the Santa Fe Senior Citizens Program for over 20 years. He jumped at Missoula during the 1946 season making seven practice jumps and one fire jump on July 29, 1946, breaking his ankle and ending his smokejumping career.

Richard Thomas Moore (Missoula '46)

Richard was born November 4, 1924, in Spokane, Washington. He married Louise Meadows in Missoula in June of 1946. Richard married Evelyn King in June of 1991 and has lived in Seattle, Washington. Some records mention USAF retired and working at a Seattle newspaper, but this has not been verified. Can't find any date of death as of January 2021.

He jumped at Missoula during the 1946 season and had seven practice and four fire jumps.

Robert Sterling Morgan (Missoula '46)

Bob, 66, died October 15, 1988, in Helena, Montana. He was born August 27, 1922, in Choteau, Montana. Bob died one day after retiring from the USFS. He had been Forest Supervisor for both the Helena and Bitterroot N.F. He jumped at Missoula 1946-48.

William A. "Bill" Morin (Missoula '46)

Bill, 82, died February 21, 2011, in Butte, Montana. He was born March 21, 1928, in Missoula, and attended St. Joseph's Boarding School and St. Anthony's Grade School. He graduated from Missoula County High School in 1947

He attended the University of Montana in his native Missoula, after jumping there in 1946-48. Bill started his work in fire safety as a lookout when he was 15 years old. He hiked to Mann Gulch on a guided tour for the 50th anniversary of the 1949 disaster that killed 13 firefighters, including several of his friends. Bill had a career in sales for more than 50 years, retiring at 70.

Orvel C. Morris (North Cascades '46)

Orvel, 68, died November 27, 1991, in Omak, Washington. He was born May 14, 1923, in Tacoma. Orvel graduated from Okanogan H.S. in 1940 and entered the Navy during WWII. After the war, he jumped at North Cascades 1946-50 before re-enlisting in 1950 and serving until 1966. After

his retirement from the Navy, he was a fire patrol pilot and co-pilot for fire-retardant aircraft.

Charles Joseph “Charley Joe” Muehlethaler (Missoula '46)

Charles, 92, died August 31, 2014, in Green Bay, Wisconsin. He was born July 26, 1922, in Gettysburg, South Dakota, and grew up near Rathdrum, Idaho, where he graduated from high school. Charles served in the Navy during WWII and was discharged in 1946.

He graduated from the University of Idaho with a degree in Forestry. While there he joined the ROTC to earn a little extra money. His service in the ROTC also earned him a tour with the U.S. Air Force in Korea as a Lieutenant and Navigator of a Lockheed F94B Interceptor. He came home after 47 missions across the DMZ.

Charles had several civilian jobs including working for MacDonal Douglas, Idaho Forestry Department, Diamond Match, and Weyerhaeuser where he retired from after 35 years. He jumped at Missoula during the 1946-47, 1949 seasons and got 11 practice and 12 fire jumps.

Andrew Glen “Ace” Nielsen (McCall '46)

“Ace,” 96, died May 22, 2019. He was born December 27, 1922, in Kuna, Iowa. Glen attended Boise Jr. College where he played shortstop on the baseball team. Ace later graduated from Idaho State. He was a Naval aviator during WWII, and you can see his display at the Nampa, Idaho, Warhawk Air Museum.

Ace was involved in the Idaho Dairy Association and was President of the Meridian Dairy Days. He was a regular attendee at the local smokejumper gatherings. Ace jumped at McCall 1946-48.

Daniel James O’Rourke Jr. (Cave Junction '46)

Dan, 89, died December 31, 2014, in St. Ignatius, Montana. He was born February 26, 1925, in Charleroi, Pennsylvania. He married Alora F. Craine in 1946 in Santa Barbara, California. Dan entered the Marine Corps in 1942 and was discharged in 1945. He was among the 25 all-military veteran crew to jump at Cave Junction in 1946. Dan’s occupation was listed as “Forest Ranger” which might indicate a career with the USFS.

Dan jumped at CJ in 1946 and Missoula 1951-52. He had 11 training and 12 fire jumps.

Clayton Ogle (Missoula '46)

Clayton Ogle died in Helena, Montana, July 27, 2001, of a heart attack. Clayt was born Nov. 11, 1924, in Butte. In 1933 he moved with his family to Helena where he completed high school in 1943, then enlisted in the Army Air Corps. He completed 25 combat missions as a B-17 ball turret gunner, helping destroy oil refineries and transportation targets in Nazi Germany. He was decorated with the Purple Heart, three Air Medals and five campaign stars and his 301st Bomb Group received two Presidential Citations.

Following his discharge in 1945, Clayt enrolled at the University of Montana School of Forestry. In 1946 and 1947, he completed 18 jumps as a smokejumper on fires in Montana and northern Idaho. Clayt received a BS in forestry from UM in 1949 and later did graduate studies at Montana State University, UM, the University of Oklahoma, and Utah State University. He worked 34 years for the U.S. Soil Conservation Service.

Following assignments at Townsend, Helena, Glasgow and Lewistown, Montana, he supervised the plant and biological science programs for the agency statewide from in Bozeman. He retired after seven years as chief of operations and management for Montana's 60 Soil Conservation Service field offices.

Danny On (Cave Junction '46)

Danny, a Forest Service silviculturist, died at the age of 55 in a skiing accident on The Big Mountain ski slopes January 21, 1979. He was a survivor of the 101st Airborne unit that fought in Europe during WWII, where he was wounded. Returning from WWII, Danny enrolled at the University of Montana to earn a master's degree in Forestry. Among his Forestry schoolmates and friends in Missoula, Danny was better known for his "break-away" and "long delay" parachute jumps, and love for hunting and photography.

As a Forest Service employee, Danny became widely known as a nature photographer, conservationist, and avid skier on Montana's Big Mountain ski slopes. Being revered by many, a Danny On Memorial National Recreation Trail was created in Whitefish, Montana, on the Tally Lake Ranger District of the Flathead National Forest. It is said to be by far the most popular trail on the forest with approximately 15,000 people hiking the trail each year. Danny jumped at Cave Junction 1946-47 and 1952-53.

John Jennings "Jack" Osborne Jr. (Missoula '46)

Jack was born August 3, 1925, in Missoula, Montana. Research indicates currently (12/20), he is living in Kalispell, Montana, and is 95 years old. His

occupation was listed as "Accountant." He married Marion Badgley in 1947 in Stevensville, MT. Jack jumped the 1946-47 seasons and had 9 practice and 9 fire jumps.

Otto H. Ost (Missoula '46)

No definite connection to smokejumping. Time and date fit.

Otto Henry Ost was born on July 17, 1922, in Beulah, North Dakota. He married Barbara Ann Jerrow on September 15, 1951, in Kalispell, Montana. They had two children during their marriage. He died on September 18, 1992, at the age of 70. He jumped at Missoula 1946-50.

Richard "Dick" Peltier (Missoula '46)

Dick, 85, died March 30, 2010, in Kalispell, Montana. He attended Lincoln County High School in Eureka, Montana, quitting at 17 to join the Army. Dick, like many of his generation, started work with the Forest Service at an early age and did some firefighting on the Kootenai NF in 1941 before WWII where he served with the 11th Airborne in the South Pacific. He was a part of the peace treaty ceremony between the U.S. and Japan in 1945.

Dick jumped three seasons (46-48) and was married in 1949. He then worked at a variety of jobs ranging from ranching, packer, aerial observer, and ski lift operator. He lived in Libby, Montana, for 33 years and worked in the woods as a faller and dozer operator.

Robert William Petty (Missoula '46)

Bob passed away in Spokane, Washington, on June 20, 2013. He was born on September 11, 1921, in Buffalo Gap, South Dakota. He was raised in Hot Springs, SD and graduated Hot Springs High School in 1939.

Bob went on to serve in WWII in the Army Air Corps. While serving on the USAAF 96th Bomb Squadron, he was awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross.

After the war, Bob would graduate the University of Montana with a degree in Journalism. He became the editor for several newspapers in Montana and Washington. He jumped at Missoula 1946-48 and had eleven practice and 6 fire jumps.

Clem LeRoy Pope (Cave Junction '46)

Clem died October 10, 2014, in Hood River, Oregon. He was a WWII paratrooper and the second known smokejumper to serve with the OSS in China.

Clem jumped at Cave Junction after the war and continued his education in Forestry receiving his bachelor's from Purdue and a master's degree from Michigan.

He was well known in the Oregon logging and lumbering industry throughout the 1950s, 60s and 70s. Perhaps most significant in his career during that time was his role with Hult Lumber and Plywood of Horton and Junction City, Oregon.

Clem's grandson, Clem V. Pope (GAC-03), is an NSA Scholarship winner and jumped at Grangeville.