

3-10-2022

Smokejumper biographies for 1947 rookie class, A-H

National Smokejumper Association

1947 Rookie Smokejumpers A-H

Max Aiken (Missoula '47)

Max, 87, died May 12, 2013, in Salem, Oregon. He served in the U.S. Army from September 1945 through November 1946, and later had stints with the National Guard in Oregon and California. Max earned a bachelor's degree in Forestry from the University of Michigan, a master's degree in Divinity from the American Baptist Seminary of the West, and a master's in Education from Oregon College of Education (now Western Oregon University). He also earned a degree from the Council for Clinical Training.

Max worked in the timber industry and as a pastor before becoming a counselor for Marion County Juvenile Court and the Mid-Willamette Jobs Council. He jumped at Missoula during the 1947 season. Max's enthusiasm for travel took him to many parts of the U.S. as well as to Germany, India, and the United Kingdom. Max jumped at Missoula during the 1947 season.

Marvin A. Amundson (Missoula '47)

Marv died February 5, 2010, at his home in Butte, Montana. He served in the Marine Corps during WWII. After the war Marv graduated from the University of Montana with a degree in forestry. He retired in 1985 as the District Ranger for the Beaverhead N.F. Marv and his wife, Joann, raised close to 200 foster children in the past 18 years. He jumped at Missoula 1947-48, 1950-52 and was an NSA member.

William "Bill" Anderson (Missoula '47)

Bill, 85, died April 19, 2012, in Stevensville, Montana. He joined the U.S. Navy in 1945 and earned an honorable discharge. After working as a Forest Service lookout, Bill trained and jumped from Missoula during the 1947 season. He worked as a parts man and service manager at Mountain Tractor Company and later served as a parts man at Missoula Truck Sales. He rode on horseback through most of Montana's western wilderness.

Frederick W. Annala (Missoula '47)

Fred died July 17, 2001, in Milwaukee, Wisconsin. He was born in Butte, Montana, where he attended school. After joining the Army in 1951, he moved to Milwaukee. He jumped one season at Missoula.

Ayling, Albert T. (Missoula '47)

Albert graduated from Michigan State University in 1950 with degree in Forestry and worked with the city of Detroit Forestry Dept. for 10 years. He then started and was head of the Forestry Dept. for the city of Warren, MI, (8 years) before moving on to the head of Buildings and Grounds for Fairmont Parks, city of Philadelphia (2 years).

Albert then worked in sales for Monroe Tree & Landscape, Rochester, NY (10 years) and as an estimator for Wesley Paving and Construction (8 years) where he sold and supervised \$4 million paving and underground work per year. He started Timberland Inc. a company that specialized in clearing land for construction of new highways (3 years). Al retired in 1991 and worked part time as tree and landscaping consultant. Al jumped at Missoula during the 1947 season and had four fire jumps.

Edward Charles Bangle (Missoula '47)

Ed, 88, died December 30, 2007, in Grass Valley, California. He was born August 20, 1919, in San Dimas, California. He is pictured in the University of Montana 1950 yearbook. He jumped at Missoula during the 1947 season.

Marvin L. "Bus" Bertram (McCall '47)

Bus, 92, a resident of Moses Lake, Washington, died June 12, 2019. Bus was born in Picabo, Idaho, on Nov. 27, 1926. He grew up in Boise, Idaho, and attended Boise High where he excelled at football, earning all-state honors, before graduating in 1945.

After graduation, Bus enlisted in the Army during WWII with the 101st Airborne Division in Europe. His unit helped liberate prisoners from the Dachau concentration camp in Germany at the end of the war.

Bus was called back into service with the U.S. Air Force when the Korean War began in 1950 and served as a Master Sergeant. Bus jumped at McCall in 1947 and the 1952 seasons.

William H. "Bill" Brandt (Missoula '47)

Bill was born in Great Falls, Montana, May 25, 1927, and went through the school system there graduating from Great Falls H.S. He worked Blister Rust Control in '44, was a Lookout in '45 and went into the Navy just after the end of WWII in June 1945-46. He was assigned to Naval Air and was rated Aviation Machinists Mate third class when released.

Bill used the GI Bill and enrolled in the University of Montana starting in Forestry but finishing with a degree in Botany in 1950. While at Montana he was a member of the Track Team. He jumped the 1947 season at

Missoula. While at Montana “I was invited to take the Rhodes Scholarship interview—not select—celebrated at Oxford Saloon.”

Bill went on to get his Masters (1951) and Ph.D. (1954) from Ohio State. Paid for graduate studies at Ohio State with funds from his GI Bill. He went on to serve 34 years as a faculty member of the Dept. of Botany at Oregon State University (1956-1990).

Bill has always been physically active. “One summer (1948) the word was that there was to be a dance that evening at the Many Glacier Hotel. So, after work (5:00 p.m.), with a light pack, I set out running the 15 miles over Ptarmigan Pass and made by 8:00 p.m. After a shower and cleanup, I arrived at the dance by 9:00 p.m. To my disgust, the dance ended at 10:00 p.m.” In later years he climbed Mt. Hood, rafted the Grand Canyon, and skied for 50 years. Bill is currently living in Corvallis, Oregon (2022).

Wesley William Brennan (Missoula’47)

Wesley, 85, died Dec. 18, 2012, in Sun Lakes, Arizona. He was born May 18, 1927, in Missoula, Montana and graduated from Hellgate H.S. where he played basketball and baseball.

He attended the University of Montana after a stint in the U.S. Navy, stationed in Hawaii. Wesley jumped at Missoula during the 1947 season. He worked for Carpenter Paper Company and later Nationwide Paper, living in New Mexico and Texas before returning to Montana during that career.

John W. Brinkerhoff (Missoula ’47)

John, 94, died October 5, 2017. After graduating from Flathead High School in 1941 he joined the Navy in 1942 and spent three years with the Seabees in the South Pacific during WWII.

After the war John graduated from the University of Montana in 1950 with a degree in forestry. He was called back into the Navy during the Korean War and served another year and a half.

John began his career with the Forest Service in 1951 and moved to Missoula in 1963 and retired in 1977. After retirement he returned to the Flathead Valley where he would live the rest of his life. John jumped at Missoula during the 1947-48 seasons.

Joseph Buhaly (North Cascades ’47)

Joe, 91, died May 16, 2017, in Tacoma, Washington. He graduated with a degree in agriculture from Washington State University.

Joe was a career Forester and worked for the State Dept. of Natural Resources, USFS, Soil Conservation Service and the Washington State University Extension Center.

Joe enlisted in the Army Air Corps in 1944 and followed with his education at Washington State University where he got his degree. He jumped at North Cascades 1947-50.

Charles W. “Chuck” Burk (Missoula '47)

Chuck, 92, died January 13, 2015, in Sequim, Washington. He was born September 2, 1922, in Sioux Falls, SD. After attending a year at Augustana College in Sioux Falls, he enlisted in the Navy where he served on the USS California and the USS Cleveland during WWII.

After the war he went to the University of Montana where he received his degree in Forest Management. Chuck briefly worked for Weyerhaeuser before joining the Forest Service where he had a 33-year career in Northern California and Montana. He retired in 1985 and moved to Sequim with his wife. Chuck jumped at Missoula for the 1947 and 1948 seasons.

David Evans Burt (Missoula '47)

Dave died in an auto accident sometime after 1963. He was born September 10, 1927 and graduated from Fullerton High School (California) in June 1945. Dave was in the 82nd Airborne 1946-47 and was from San Francisco at that time. He attended the University of Montana and the University of New Mexico. Dave jumped at Missoula 1947-50.

Dave was an experienced skydiver and stunt man. He was said to try anything from wing walking to dangerous late openings. One time he and Starr Jenkins (CJ-48) parachuted into the Grand Canyon and floated out on a rubber raft. Dave was technical director for the old TV series “Ripcord.”

William L. “Bill” Carver (Missoula '47)

Bill, 79, of Missoula, passed away from complications of lung cancer on Jan. 27, 2007. He graduated from Hamilton High School, but before attending graduation ceremonies he was ordered to report for duty in the U.S. Navy. He was discharged from the Navy in 1947 and attended college at Montana State University and later transferred to the University of Montana, where he graduated. Bill jumped at Missoula from 1947 through the 1957 seasons. He worked for the U.S. Forest Service as an administrative contract officer until his retirement in 1982.

Del F. Catlin (McCall '47)

Del died April 17, 2015. He graduated from high school in Oakley, Idaho, and went into the US Army as a paratrooper in the 503rd Parachute Infantry Regiment. Their successful combat jump on Corregidor February 16, 1945, earned the unit a Presidential Unit Citation for the liberation of "The Rock."

After the war Del attended the University of Idaho for a short time before joining the McCall Smokejumpers in 1947. He became project leader at McCall in 1957 and continued at that position until 1977 when he was forced to stop jumping by the "40-years-old" policy that was in effect at the time. Del ended up with 179 jumps of which 107 were fire jumps.

After retirement from the USFS, he went to work managing the Hollenbeak Ranch for another 30 years. Del's wife of 66 plus years, Joye, passed away on April 14, just three days before Del.

Parley E. "Bill" Cherry (Missoula '47)

Bill died March 17, 2012. He graduated from the University of Idaho and lived in the Denver area from 1960 until his death. Bill worked for Weyerhaeuser 1952-60, Boise Cascade 1960-65, Potlatch Corp. 1967-83, and owned and operated Colorado Forest Industries from 1983-2000.

Bill served in WWII and Vietnam and was a member of the Colorado Air National Guard. He retired from the military in 1985 as a Lt. Colonel in the Air Force. After his rookie year in Missoula, Bill jumped at Idaho City for the 1947-48 seasons.

Compton, Leo P. (McCall '47)

Leo enlisted in the Army during WWI right out of high school in 1943 and was assigned to the Army Air Corps where he was trained to be a B-17 pilot. After the war Leo enrolled at Boise Jr. College and played two years of football. He jumped at McCall in 1947 and got eight fire jumps. At Idaho City in 1948, Leo got two fire jumps.

Leo was injured on a fire jump in Idaho when his chute was collapsed by a tree, and he dislocated both ankles and a wrist. He had to wait 24 hours for a rescue team to jump in and carry him out.

Leo graduated from Idaho State University with a degree in education and taught for 20 years. He received his master's degree in 1968 and went to advertising where he worked until 1985 when he retired. Leo then substitute taught in the school system until he was 85. He was 94 in July 2020.

William H. Covey (Missoula '47)

Bill, 90, died on January 13, 2019, in Kalispell, MT. He grew up in Missoula and joined the USFS in 1944 at age 16 and worked three seasons before joining the Army. Upon discharge, he worked as a smokejumper from 1947-52. Bill went to the University of Montana on the GI Bill and graduated with a degree in forestry in 1952 and rejoined the Army as a counterintelligence officer in D.C. until his discharge in 1955. After his discharge he completed his master's degree in forestry and went to work for Bob Helan Logging before joining the USFS in 1959.

Bill's 25-year career with the Forest Service included positions as District Ranger, Forest Supervisor and Director of Timber Management for the Northern Region.

Upon retirement, Bill lived in Flathead Lake and spent the last 20 years in Kalispell where his was a passionate hunter, fisherman and outdoorsman.

Roger Mowbray "Rod" Davidson (McCall '47)

Roger "Rod" Mowbray Davidson, 78 died August 4, 2005, in Boise. He was born in Boise April 12, 1927. He served with the U.S. Naval Reserve from 1945 to 1947. After finishing his military service, Rod heard about a line of work that he couldn't resist-smokejumping. The U.S. Forest Service was in the process of opening a fire suppression base in McCall and Rod and several adventure-minded pals couldn't sign on fast enough. He fought fire with relish and distinction from 1947 to 1951 and came to be known as the legendary "Toad" in the process. He counted the time spent with his fellow jumpers as some of the best of his life.

After completing a successful career with Mobil Oil Company in Southern California, Rod moved his family back to Boise in 1964. He opened the Brass Lamp Pizza Parlors in Boise and McCall and later opened Tom Graine's Sporting Pub and the Highlands Hollow Brew House.

Rod's affinity for people was contrasted by his love for the lakes and rivers and places in untamed parts of Idaho. His work with the Forest Service was always a source of delight. If there was a lookout tower within a hundred miles, he would lead his family there. Fighting fires in the remotest parts of the state was something he treasured. Rod jumped at McCall 1947-50.

Richard Lincoln Denison (Missoula' 47)

Richard, age 86, died May 10, 2013, in Spokane, WA. He was born June 5, 1926, in Los Angeles, CA, where he grew up and was educated. He enlisted in the Army Air Corps on December 2, 1944. He attended the

University of Idaho, Moscow, ID. He jumped at Missoula in 1947, making seven practice jumps and four fire jumps.

Ted A. Dethlefs (Missoula '47)

Ted, 85, died May 7, 2011, in Salem, Oregon. He served in the Navy Air Corps after joining at age 17 and served 1943-46. Ted was commissioned a Lieutenant Junior Grade just as the war ended; he served briefly in Hawaii shuttling troops and equipment back to the states.

Ted learned of the smokejumper program while he was a forestry student at Washington State. Although he had no prior fire experience, he was hired as a smokejumper in 1947. By the time his season was over Ted's six fire jumps had landed him in two states and on five national forests.

He went on to earn a B.A. in business economics and then a M.A. in Recreation at Washington State. The years following college found Ted in Kellogg, Idaho, (1 year) with the YMCA, then with the City of Tacoma at a Community Center and with the State of Washington at the Western State Hospital as a recreation therapist. For the next 40 years Ted was with the State of Oregon as Recreation Director for the Institution for the Retarded and then with the Oregon State Parks as a Community Consultant.

Albert H. DeVoe (Cave Junction '47)

Al died at the age of 81 on September 15, 2004. He was a licensed Land Surveyor, who taught at Sierra College and was a member of the Blue Devils 88th Infantry with whom he served in North Africa and Italy.

He received his bachelor's degree in Forestry from the University of Washington. Al was a timber appraiser in Oregon, a professional land surveyor in California and Nevada and a credentialed community college instructor in California.

Al participated in Sac Valley Soaring Society and was an NSA member. He also belonged to the Carmichael VFW, Post 5324, and his dedication in the last years was the Historical Folsom Chinese Cemetery.

Wallace J. Dobbins (Missoula '47)

Wally passed away November 18, 2002. He is survived by his wife of 54 years, Marian. He grew up in the northwest and served in the Army with the Corps of Engineers in the Philippines and Okinawa during World War II.

After the war, Wally joined the smokejumpers and fought forest fires for eight summers. He jumped at Missoula 1947-51, 55, 57, and Grangeville in 1952.

He graduated from the University of Montana in 1952 and was recruited by the CIA on a project in Taiwan. In 1969, Wally returned to his passion of teaching and coaching for Marana Public Schools until his retirement in 1987.

Donald M. Durland (Missoula '47)

Don died Monday, Oct. 2, 2006, at his home in St. Regis, Montana, after a lengthy illness. He attended Darby Schools and received a B.S. degree in forestry from the University of Montana.

While in high school, he joined the Army Air Force Reserve and was honorably discharged in 1945. He started a career as a smokejumper, but it ended in 1947 when his chute malfunctioned while jumping to a fire in Roaring Mountain Canyon in the Bitterroot Valley. The accident resulted in a fractured back requiring a rescue team to transport him 13 miles via a stretcher.

He retired after 36 years with the U.S. Forest Service, with assignments in Montana, Idaho, and Alaska.

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Terry Fieldhouse (Cave Junction '47)

Terry, 81, died June 5, 2010, at his home in Nevada City, California. He was born on September 23, 1928, in Santa Monica, CA. He jumped four seasons while attending the Washington State University and earning his degree in forestry.

Terry worked as a Forester in the Dominican Republic and Alaska before shifting to teaching and getting his master's degree in Education from Stanford University. He taught 1962-83 in the south bay area of San Francisco. Every summer during his teaching career, while out of school,

he took the position of forest ranger in the Olympic National Forest in Washington state.

He spent two years in the Peace Corps in Honduras in his mid-fifties. Terry's son Paul (MYC-83) was also a smokejumper.

Roland K. "Rollie" Fisher (Missoula '47)

After a brief struggle with acute myeloid leukemia, Rollie died on November 4, 2016, at home in Helena, Montana. He was born on September 25, 1926, in Oroville, CA. Rollie graduated from Helena High School one year after being severely injured in a hunting accident during his junior year. The accident prevented him from serving in the military during WWII, something he regretted most of his life.

While in high school and college, he worked skidding logs outside of Lincoln and transported logs over Stemple Pass to the sawmill at Silver City. He played football for the Montana State University Grizzlies for one year before transferring to Bozeman to attend what was then Montana State College

After working for Mountain States Telephone and Telegraph for twenty years at different levels of sales and marketing management, he took on the challenge of helping Montana hospitals navigate a relatively new program called Medicare as the Executive Vice President of the Montana Hospital Association. He retired in 1988.

Hugh H. Fowler (Missoula '47)

Hugh, 74, a Missoula jumper (47-48, 52-61) and foreman, died from lymphoma August 4, 2003, at a hospital near his home in Mesa, Arizona. He was born in Kalispell in 1929.

Following his smokejumping career, he worked for the Forest Service's Division of Fire Management in Washington, D.C.

He then was a disaster manager for the President's Office of Emergency Preparedness Region VIII in Bothell, Washington and, following his retirement from the Federal Government, was director of Emergency Services for the State of Washington. He later worked in disaster services for the State of Arizona.

Charles Evans Garrison (Missoula '47)

Charles jumped at Missoula 1947-49. He was born on August 28, 1925, in Virginia City, Montana. He married Idell Fryhling October 15, 1948, in Missoula, Montana. They had five children during their marriage. He died on December 20, 2004, at the age of 79, and was buried in Boulder City, Nevada. His headstone reads: Col USAF Korea/Vietnam, SM3 Navy WWII.

Virgil “Max” Glaves (McCall '47)

Max died February 18, 2018, in Escondido, CA. He grew up in Ontario, Oregon, before going to the University of Idaho on a football scholarship. After graduation he joined the Marines Corps and was deployed to Korea. After two years of active duty and eight years in the reserves, he left the Corps as a Captain.

Max settled in Escondido and made his living selling insurance. He had a close bond with his smokejumper buddies. His kids thought that his last jump in 2018 should have been with Lloyd Johnson and Wayne Webb spotting and Kenny Roth and Bob Fogg in the cockpit of a Trimotor. Max jumped at McCall 1947-51.

Robert V. “Bob” Gorsuch (Missoula' 47)

Bob graduated with a bachelor's degree in Forestry from the University of Idaho in 1951. He started working for the USFS as a lookout in 1943-44 before going into the Army in 1945-46. Bob jumped at Missoula 1947-50 and at West Yellowstone 1951-52 before a long career, 1953-83, with the USFS.

After his retirement from the FS, Bob worked part time for FEMA working over 50 major disasters averaging three per year. He is a Life Member of the NSA and is living in Lake Oswego, Oregon.

James Oliver Harrison (Missoula '47)

James, 20, died August 5, 1949, in the Mann Gulch Fire. He was working as a fire guard that season and had been working on the fire. He met the 15 jumpers once they were on the ground. He jumped at Missoula during the 1947 season but stopped jumping as his mother consider it “too dangerous.” Jim had four fire jumps during the 1947 season. He was born February 8, 1929, in Spokane, Washington, grew up in Missoula and received his education at St. Anthony's grammar school and Missoula County H.S. where he graduated in 1945 where he was a member of the state champion football team.

James would have been entering his senior year at Montana State University in the fall where he was a chemistry major.

Alonzo Keith “Gus” Hendrickson (North Cascades '47)

Alonzo Keith Hendrickson was born on September 14, 1928, in Havana, Kansas. He married April 4, 1954 and had one child during his marriage. Gus died as a young father on June 23, 1958, in Winthrop, Washington, at the age of 29, and was buried in Omak, Washington. Gus was in the USAF 1951-55

Gus was on a twin beech dropping cargo on the Eight Mile Ridge Fire 15 miles north of Winthrop when it crashed. He was foreman at NCSB at the time of the crash. He jumped at NCSB 1947-51 and 1955-58.

Gene E. Hinkle (Missoula '47)

NSA Life Member Gene Hinkle, 92, died July 31, 2020, in Albuquerque, NM. He was born July 24, 1928, in Dykes, MO. Gene graduated from Missouri State University with a degree in Business Administration. He started in career in the financial field but changed to real estate in 1954. Gene was selected as the Outstanding Young Man of Albuquerque in 1957 and the same honor for the State of New Mexico in 1958.

In 1958 he started the real estate firm of Walker and Hinkle and was its president for 20 years. The firm was the largest all-purpose firm in the state employing over 100 salesmen.

Later Gene started the Hinkle Corporation, Hinkle Income Properties LLC, Hinkle Homes, and Hinkle Investments. He has managed income properties for over 60 years. He and his wife celebrated their 70th anniversary in Nov. 2020. Gene jumped at Missoula in 1947 with seven practice and four fire jumps.