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# Smokejumpers in History

National Smokejumper Association

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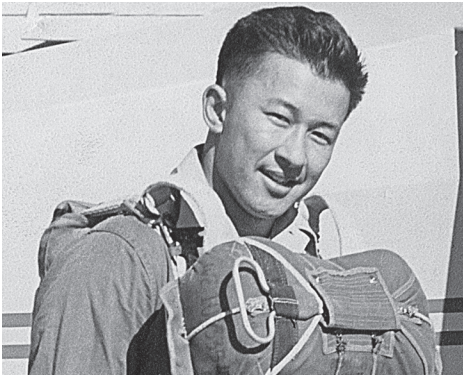
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# SMOKEJUMPERS IN HISTORY



**DANNY ON**

Danny On was originally from Red Bluff, California. After serving as a paratrooper with the U.S. Army's 101st Airborne Division in World War II, Danny joined the smokejumpers and jumped from the base at Cave Junction, Oregon during fire seasons in 1946, 1947, 1952 and 1953. Danny worked for the U.S. Forest Service in the Deschutes National Forest in Oregon, and the Kootenai National Forest in Montana, and was known as one of Montana's best wildlife photographers. He was killed during a skiing accident in January 1979, and the Danny On National Recreation Trail near Whitefish, Montana was named in his honor.

*Photo courtesy of the National Smokejumper Association*



**COL. STUART ROOSA, (USAF RET.)**

Stuart Allen Roosa was born on August 16, 1933 in Durango, Colorado. He traveled to Idaho in the summer of 1951, and followed a friend into smokejumping in 1953. He was 19 years old during his rookie season. Roosa later joined the U.S. Air Force and served as an experimental test pilot at Edwards Air Force Base, California. In 1966, Roosa was one of 19 people selected to undergo astronaut training, later serving as the Command Module Pilot for the Apollo 14 lunar mission in 1971 alongside astronauts Alan Shepard and Edgar Mitchell. He was assigned to the Space Shuttle program until his retirement in 1976. During his career he logged more than 5,500 hours of flight time and 217 hours in space.

*The Apollo 14 crew: (L-R) Stuart Roosa, Alan Shepard, Edgar Mitchell  
Photo courtesy of the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA)*



**WILLI UNSOELD**

Renowned mountain climber William Francis "Willi" Unsoeld was born in 1926 in Arcata, California, and attended high school in Eugene, Oregon. In 1944 he enrolled at Oregon State College, during which time he served as a smokejumper out of the Cave Junction Base in 1950. He was best known for his participation in the successful 1963 climb of Mt. Everest. On that climb, Unsoeld and Thomas Hornbein became the first climbers to scale Everest's west ridge. Other significant climbs in which Unsoeld participated included the 1954 California Himalayan Expedition to Malaku and the 1960 American-Pakistan Karakoram Expedition to Mt. Mashabram in the Western Himalayas. After stints with the Peace Corps and Outward Bound, Unsoeld joined the staff at Evergreen College in Washington. Willi Unsoeld died in an avalanche on Mt. Rainier on March 4, 1979.

*Willi Unsoeld and his daughter Devi. Photo courtesy of Jolene Unsoeld*



**GEORGE KENTON "KEN" SISLER**

While attending Arkansas State University, Ken served as a smokejumper out of the North Cascades Smokejumper Base during the 1957 season. After college, Sisler joined the U.S. Army in 1964, later serving as part of the Studies and Observation Group (SOG), a highly secretive organization whose members were drawn from ranks of other special operations teams from across the U.S. military. In 1967, 1st Lt. Sisler was serving as a reconnaissance team leader in Laos conducting damage assessments following a B-52 strike. Soon after landing, his unit came under heavy enemy fire by more than 100 North Vietnamese soldiers. Over the next several hours, Lt. Sisler carried several of his severely wounded comrades to safety, while fighting off the much larger enemy force with machine gun fire and hand grenades. He was posthumously awarded the Medal of Honor.

*Portrait of 1Lt. Ken Sisler. Image courtesy of Becky Sisler Wilson*