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Smokeyumper biographies for 1949 rookie class, R-W

National Smokeyumper Association

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1949 Rookie Class R-W

Clarence J. “Jim” Rabideau (North Cascades '49)

Jim was born February 21, 1926, in Portland, Oregon, and grew up in Mason City, WA. He was in the Navy 1944-47 and worked on Coulee Dam after his discharge. Jim graduated from Eastern Washington University in 1949 and was called back into the Navy 1949-52 during the Korean War.

After his discharge he went to the University of Washington Law School and graduated in 1955. He jumped at NCSB 1949, '53 and 1954. Jim started his law practice in Pasco, Washington, and was County Prosecutor from 1962-86. He retired from the Navy and law in 1986 and is an NSA Life Member currently living in Pasco.

Phillip Adrian Rabideau (North Cascades '49)

Phil, 93, died May 10, 2021. He jumped at NCSB in 1949 and graduated from the University of Washington in 1951 with a degree in Electrical Engineering. Phil worked for Westinghouse Electric and rose to the executive level. While working in Detroit, Michigan, he earned his MBA from Wayne State University.

Phil grew up in Grand Coulee Dam, Washington, and was active in the Boy Scouts and loved the outdoors. He was in the Navy during WWII. Phil rookied with his brother, Jim, in the 1949 class at NCSB.

William B. Risken (Missoula '49)

Bill Risken, who jumped the 1949 and 1950 seasons at Missoula, died of lung cancer on May 11, 2005. He was 77 and a resident of Liberty Lake, Washington at the time of his death.

Bill was born in Chile where his father was an accountant for a copper mine. After a brief stay in New Jersey, he moved to Montana with his family when he was 12. He began work for the Forest Service as a lookout when he was 16, and at 17 joined the Marines, who used him as a scout in the Aleutian Islands.

He jumped the 1949-50 seasons while attending college under the GI Bill, but then trained as an electrician and lineman. He worked for Inland Power and Light and as chief of maintenance for the Central Valley School District before retiring from Vera Water and Power in the early 1990s.

Jack Rose (Missoula '49)

Jack was born in 1928, and “am now (6/20) a 91-year-old trying to keep my body going.” He was in the army from 1946-1948, 11th airborne. “I was with the occupation army of Japan. After that, I started my education using

the G.I bill.” He jumped at Missoula in 1949 and NCSB in 1950. Jack received his B.A from Cal Berkeley School of Forestry in 1953, masters in Forest Administration from Yale in 1956 and LLD from UCLA Law school in 1961.

As an attorney in the L.A district attorney's office he spent two years getting trial experience before going into private practice in Anaheim, CA. Jack became known for his case against the American Motorcycle Association. He retired in 1988 and purchased a second home in Sun Valley, Idaho, and had a wonderful life of skiing, fishing, and hiking until 2008 when medical issues sent him back to his Fullerton, CA house.

John D. Rossheim (Missoula '49)

Even though he was from New Jersey, John, as a high school student, worked the summer of 1943 on blister rust control in Montana before going into the Navy in WWII. He served in the Navy 1944-46 and 1951-52. John graduated with his bachelor's degree in Forestry in 1951 and his master's in 1956 from Oregon State University. He was in the printing business and retired in 1981.

“Regarding 1949 and jumping. I was with a group of students from Colorado A&M that was talked into jumping by Dick Wilson (MSO-48). I rode up in a car with Chuck Dickie (NCSB-51) who hadn't signed up in advance but hoped to be hired. He didn't get hired but later signed on at Winthrop and jumped two seasons.

“I had seven training and four fire jumps. Got my arm caught in the static line on a training jump, used the emergency chute and came down under two chutes.

“In later life living in the Shenandoah Valley in Virginia, I got to know a few of the CPS jumpers, mainly Jim Brunk (MSO-45).”

Willis Berchard “Bill” Rude (MSO-49)

Bill was born August 7, 1925, in East Jordan, Michigan. He attended the University of Michigan and graduated in 1948 with a BS degree in Forestry. He was a smokejumper in Missoula, Montana 1949-50. In 1949 he had seven training jumps and five fire jumps. In 1950 he had two practice jumps and one fire jump.

Bill was lifelong resident of Muskegon, Michigan. He worked for the S. D. Warren Company, a pulp and paper company in Muskegon. Bill was an active member of the Michigan Forest Association and is currently living in Muskegon, Michigan.

Joe N. Rumble (Missoula '49)

Joe, 88, died January 5, 2016, at his home in Monitor, Washington. He graduated from Albuquerque High School in 1945 and studied forestry at the University of Idaho for a year before being drafted into the Navy in 1946. He returned to Idaho after being discharged in 1947 and graduated in 1952 with bachelor's degrees in both mining and metallurgical engineering.

He made his career with Alcoa, beginning at Wenatchee in 1956, and transferring to work as ingot plant superintendent at Point Comfort, Texas, and Badin, North Carolina, retiring in 1987 with thirty-one years of service. He had bought an orchard near Wenatchee in 1970 and returned to manage it upon retiring. He was very active, enjoying running, biking, racquetball, skiing, and hiking. He took up paragliding at the age of 70, and hiked the Appalachian Trail, finishing at age 76. Joe jumped at Missoula 1949-51.

Walter B. "Walt" Rumsey (Missoula '49)

Walt, 52, died June 12, 1980, in a commercial plane crash in Nebraska. He was born about 1925 in Nebraska. He was one of the three survivors of the Mann Gulch Fire in 1949 that killed 12 jumpers and fire guard Jim Harrison who had jumped at Missoula in 1947.

From *Smokejumper* magazine (condensed): "We arrived over the fire about 3:15 p.m. The air was bumpy and rough. Most of us were airsick and we could hardly wait get out of the plane. We all landed hard on the rocky ground. We left the jump area in single file and headed for the fire. The fire had spread in the hour it had taken us to get organized. and the wind was blowing briskly. Dodge led us on a gradual climb back up the north slope of the canyon going west. The fire was burning fiercely, and we could hear the roar of the flames.

"The plan was to get behind the fire. It soon became apparent that the fire had jumped across the gulch ahead of us and was now burning on our side of the draw between us and the Missouri River. Dodge immediately told us to drop our tools and gear and to follow him. The roar of the fire made it increasingly difficult to hear. Doge turned towards the ridge, and we followed single file. Many of the jumpers were yet unconcerned and had not dropped their tools as instructed. There was no panic.

"The fire was catching up with us. We were exhausted from the climb but increased our pace through fear. The fire was on us now. Dodge realized we couldn't make it and yelled for us to gather around him. I was close enough to see his lips moving but couldn't hear his voice above the terrific

roar. His orders were lost in the roar of the fire. Four of us raced for the rocky ridge, it seemed like we were covering 15 feet every step. We ran through the top of the ridge and found a rockslide. I thought that if this isn't big enough to protect us, it's too bad because we couldn't go another step."

Robert W. Sallee (Missoula '49)

Bob died in Sacred Heart Hospital, Spokane on May 26 owing to complications from open-heart surgery. He was born Aug. 18, 1931, in a farmhouse near Willow Creek, Mont.

He was the last living survivor of the 1949 Mann Gulch Fire in the Gates of the Mountains, Mont. His escape from that tragedy that killed 12 of his fellow smokejumpers and a fireguard was described in Norman Maclean's 1992 best-selling book "Young Men and Fire." Bob was two weeks shy of being 18 when he jumped this fire. He made four more fire jumps before leaving smokejumping.

Bob graduated from high school in Sandpoint, Idaho, and attended the University of Idaho before graduating from Eastern Washington University with an accounting degree in 1973. Over the course of his career he farmed, ran a hardware store and farm implement company in Fairfield, Wash., helped build a paper mill in Missoula, Mont. where he learned that industry, then went on to set up paper mills in New Zealand, India, South Africa and Algeria before settling down in Spokane to work at the Inland Empire Paper Co. for which he was employed for 24 years, eventually becoming the company's production manager before his retirement in 2000.

An avid outdoorsman, Bob was a skilled hunter and fisherman. In addition, for the past six years he participated with other retired smokejumpers restoring historical buildings and maintaining trails in the forests of Idaho and Montana.

Hal A. Samsel (Missoula '49)

Hal died April 2, 2015, just two weeks after the passing of his wife of 64 years, Betty. His Dad was District Ranger on the Seely Lake District and he started fighting fires at age 14. Hal is well known in jumper circles having stayed with the job from 1949 until his retirement in 1980. Brothers Bill (MSO-61) and Kirk (MSO-60) were also jumpers.

After graduating from high school, he rookied in 1949 before joining the Marine Corps. Hal returned to jumping in 1952 and was hired full-time at Missoula in 1957. During the last 10 years of his career, he was the parachute loft foreman retiring in 1980.

In a 2004 interview with Smokejumper Hal said he was detailed to just about all the bases at one time or another during his career. He told about one time 16 Missoula jumpers were sent down to Medford. It was the summer the airstrip at Cave Junction was closed for repairs. Being in Medford, there was no mess hall. They were on their own for food, and their money ran out quickly. They prayed for fires so they could get something to eat. The welfare fund sent down \$200 that didn't go too far with 16 jumpers. Hal said it was a good thing there was a peach orchard nearby.

Hal had seen many changes in smokejumping during his tenure on the job. There were many veterans returning from WWII in his rookie class as well as men like Fred Brauer (MSO-41) and Fred Barnowsky (MSO-42) who jumped before going off to war and were returning to that job. He had seen the jumpers go from the college types, who jumped and went on to another life, to the career jumpers.

After retiring, Hal and his wife lived in Missoula for several years while they were completing their cabin at Flathead Lake where they lived until their passing.

Lowell L. "Lucky" Scalf (Cave Junction '49)

Lowell, 89, died January 8, 2018, in Coupeville, WA. He was born in Canada in 1928 and jumped at Cave Junction 1949-50.

Lowell's true passion was telling others about the Bible. He was baptized as one of Jehovah's Witnesses in 1958.

Fredrick Paul "Fritz" Schilling (Missoula '49)

Fritz, 85, was born Dec. 3, 1928, in Missoula, Montana, and died Jan. 1, 2014, in Boise, Idaho, after a year's battle with deteriorating health and an auto accident Dec. 29 outside of Boise.

Fritz graduated from Montana State College with a bachelor's degree in Chemical Engineering and went to work in Idaho Falls. He returned to school Montana State, completing a doctorate in Chemical Engineering in 1959.

He worked at Los Alamos Scientific Laboratory, first in the nuclear reactor program, then in the computing group where he was privileged to be on a team that traveled to Honeywell to test a computer prior to buying it. The team was allowed to work on the machine in the evenings because during the day it was for display to other prospective buyers.

The Honeywell engineers started to stay around in the evenings because they had not seen how buyers were using the computers they were

making, and this was their first opportunity to see one programmed for control and data logging.

Fritz worked for many years as the group leader of the Los Alamos non-weapons engineering group. He advanced to deputy division leader in WX and retired in 1990.

Fritz jumped at Missoula in the 1949-50 seasons. He was friends with all the smokejumpers killed in the Mann Gulch Fire Aug. 5, 1949; his picture is on the cover of the book *Young Men and Fire* by Norman Maclean.

Fritz was active in the ski patrol at Pajarito Mountain. He continued his service in Silver Gate, Montana, by joining the search and rescue team and helping the Forest Service spot out-of-bounds snowmobilers

John Melvin Scicek (Missoula '49)

John died January 21, 2010, at his Port Orchard, Washington, home. He was born on April 29, 1929, in Hamilton, Montana. He jumped at Missoula in 1949-50 before serving in the U.S. Army in the Korean Conflict. John jumped again in 1954. He worked for the Civil Service in Guan, Alaska, and Washington, as a high-climber electrician.

Robert J. "Bob" Scofield (Cave Junction '49)

Bob died December 10, 2020, in Medford, Oregon. Due to wartime enlistments and lack of manpower, Bob started working with the Forest Service at age 16 and had two seasons working in Blister Rust Control and two as a lookout before he went to smokejumping. He was a student at Oregon State in Forest Management and, being very familiar with the Siskiyou NF, Cave Junction was a natural for him to enter the smokejumper program.

Bob jumped the 1949 (five fire jumps) and '50 (three fire jumps) seasons, but at the end of the 1950 season, he didn't go back to school and was drafted. He was a Sergeant First Class in the Army Signal Corps stationed in Germany.

When he came back from the military in 1953, Bob did his refresher training along with rookie and future astronaut **Stuart Roosa**. He remembers Roosa as a "sharp go-getter." They jumped out of Medford that year, and he made seven fire jumps.

In 1954 he made squadleader and had three fire jumps—a slow season. 1955 was his last year as a jumper, and he made four fire jumps.

In 1955 he graduated from Oregon State with his degree in Forest Management and started a career with the Forest Service as District

Ranger on the Routt NF in Colorado. He continued his career with the Forest Service retiring in 1984.

Marvin L. “Dick” Sherman (Missoula '49)

Dick, 21, died August 5, 1949, along with 11 other Missoula smokejumpers in the Mann Gulch Fire. He was born January 25, 1928, in Darby, Montana, and was in the Navy 1945-47. Dick grew up in Darby before moving to Missoula.

Jerry Sullivan (North Cascades '49)

Jerry died December 6, 2009. He served in the Army Airborne from 1950 to 1953 and was in the Korean War. Jerry then went to work for the USFS on the Okanogan N.F. retiring in 1982. Jerry's father was involved in the 1939 experimental program making parachute harnesses and improving the jump suits.

Michael Joseph Sullivan (Missoula '49)

Mike, 61, died of lung disease March 30, 1987. He was born July 1, 1925, in Portsmouth, N.H. where he grew up. Mike took flight training at Augustana College in Illinois during WWII and flew B-24 bombers in the Pacific Theater. In 1951 he earned his bachelor's in Forestry from the University of Montana and jumped at Missoula during the 1949 season. He listed as being the owner of a Lumber Company.

C. Dean Sutherland (North Cascades '49)

Dean died December 3, 1992, in Columbia, Washington. He was born October 31, 1930, in Lewistown, Montana. Dean served in the USAF 1954-56 and jumped at NCSB 1949-53.

Henry James Thol Jr. (Missoula '49)

Henry, 19, died August 5, 1949, along with 11 other Missoula smokejumpers in the Mann Gulch Fire. He was born April 19, 1930, in Kalispell, Montana. He grew up in Kalispell and graduated from Flathead H.S. in 1948. Henry worked for the Forest Service in 1947 as a fire guard on the Condon R.D. He planned to enter Montana State University in September.

Newton Robert Thompson (Missoula '49)

Newton, 22, died August 5, 1949, in the Mann Gulch Fire. He was born in Los Angeles, California, August 22, 1926. He was a graduate of Alhambra (CA) H.S. and an Air Force veteran. Newton had completed one year at

Pomona College in California before he rookied at Missoula in 1949. He is buried in the San Gabriel Cemetery.

James Woodbury Tripp (Missoula '49)

James Woodbury Tripp was born on September 19, 1928, in Patchogue, N.Y. He had two sons and four daughters with Patricia Hart. He died on December 18, 2013, in Kitsap, Washington, at the age of 85. He jumped at Missoula 1949-52.

Jim was raised in Colorado and Wyoming and enlisted in the Marine Corps in 1946 and then attended the University of Washington. He began his career in heavy machinery sales, then operated a series of civil construction companies in Seattle until his retirement.

Sam Wakefield (Missoula '49)

Sam, 84, died Feb. 8, 2013, in Poulsbo, Washington. He was born December 11, 1928, in San Francisco and graduated from Lowell High School. He earned his bachelor's and master's degrees in Forestry from the University of Montana.

Sam served in the Navy during the Korean War, based at the Kodiak Naval Air Station in Alaska. Following jumping stints in Missoula in 1949-50 and 1955, Sam worked as a Forest Service ranger in Bozeman, doing this partly while pursuing his master's degree.

His career took him from the Forest Service in Montana and Idaho to the Federal Water Quality Administration in Portland, to the Environmental Protection Agency in Denver and Seattle.

Donald Earl Wallace (Cave Junction '49)

Don, 84, died May 16, 2014, at his home in Las Cruces, New Mexico. He was born September 10, 1929, in Upton, Wyoming. Don served in the U.S. Army in the Occupation of Japan 1946-48, in the 8th Cavalry, 1st Brigade of the 1st (Armored) Cavalry Division. He was later called back into service during the Korean War 1950-52. He jumped at Cave Junction during the 1949-50 seasons.

Don was a graduate of the University of Washington in Seattle. He worked for The Boeing Company as a Site Development Manager. During that time, he was based in many locations including Seattle, Huntsville, New Orleans, Houston, Edwards Air Force Base, Washington DC and Izmir, Turkey. Don retired in 1990 after a career of 35 years.