

January 2021

Smokejumper Obituary: Benesh, Kenneth V. (Pilot 0000)

National Smokejumper Association

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Recommended Citation

National Smokejumper Association, "Smokejumper Obituary: Benesh, Kenneth V. (Pilot 0000)" (2021).
Smokejumper Obituaries. 247.
https://dc.ewu.edu/smokejumper_bios/247

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Smokejumper Obituary

Benesh, Kenneth V. (Pilot 0000)

Ken, 99, a 51-year resident of Upland, CA, died December 3, 2010, at Pomona Valley Hospital. He was born March 29, 1911, in Walford, Iowa. Known in his youth as the, Flying Farm Boy, he was a barnstormer, crop duster, an Army Air Corps pilot, U.S. Air Force pilot, U.S. Forest Service pilot, commercial pilot, flight instructor, aviation mechanic, and family man.

A WWII veteran, he participated in numerous campaigns in the Mediterranean, European, Pacific, China-Burma-India and Southwest Pacific Theaters. As a U.S. Forest Service pilot, he was active during the early years of aerial firefighting with both the smokejumper and air-tanker programs. His aviation career spanned 60 years and 40,000 flying hours.

His commercial flying and aircraft maintenance career took him all over the world from the Middle East to Central Africa to Southeast Asia as well as all over the U.S. He flew for a variety of companies and organizations and was involved in many kinds of aviation activities from corporate flying and air cargo to oil exploration and humanitarian relief missions.

(end of excerpt)