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Smokejumper Obituary: Deal, Daniel A. (Missoula 1943)

National Smokejumper Association

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Smokejumper Obituary

Deal, Daniel A. (Missoula 1943)

Dan, 72, died October 13, 1983, of lung cancer perhaps caused by working for years around grain dust and orchard pesticides. He was born June 8, 1911, near New Enterprise, Pennsylvania, the seventh child of a family of eight children. The family spoke Pennsylvania Dutch and attended the Church of the Brethren and were a farming family. In 1920 they migrated to Onekama, Michigan, where Dan went through all 12 grades. "We were the only family that spoke Dutch."

Dan was President of the Brethren Young People's group in high school and went to work for a farming complex upon graduation. He entered Civilian Public Service in 1942 and was selected as one of the initial smokejumpers at CPS-103 Camp in Montana. He jumped all three years of the program. Dan's son recalled later being told by his father that he was injured on his last jump when he was blown backwards into a drainage ditch and "had a backache the rest of his life."

Dan met his wife, Francis, in Missoula. She was attending the University of Montana and they married in 1945 before Dan was discharged from CPS. They had four children.

After his discharge in 1946, he and his brother moved to Onekama, Michigan, where they bought and operated a feed store until 1975. In addition, Dan bought seven acres where the family made a living buying/selling grain (built grain elevator), operating a chicken raising business, and growing/selling orchard fruit.

Dan and his family were active in the Onekama Church of the Brethren and Youth For Christ. He was involved with the church and their disaster relief programs in different parts of the U.S.

(end of excerpt)