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Smokejumper Obituary: Quay, Clarence Elwood (Missoula 1943)

National Smokejumper Association

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Smokejumper Obituary

Quay, Clarence Elwood (Missoula 1943)

Clarence, 99, died in Bridgewater, Virginia, on September 12, 2015. He was born August 11, 1916, in Spring City, Pennsylvania. In high school he participated in Track & Field and worked a lot on the family farm. He registered for the draft on October 16, 1940, when he was working for Bethlehem Steel where he had worked for five years. He received a draft deferment due to his skills at Bethlehem Steel.

Clarence was drafted into Civilian Public Service and, after working at several camps, was one of the 62 CPS men selected for the initial CPS-103 smokejumper group. "Ten days after arriving at Camp Paxon, I made my first parachute jump at 11:00 a.m. with Eagle parachute #535. The training was concise. No question too small to be answered. There was a strong emphasis on safety. October 5, 1943, Louie Goosen and I jumped two fires. Worked one for until 10:00p.m. and handled the other the next day."

When he was discharged in 1946, he returned to Bethlehem Steel but quit and did a number of jobs before entering the Church of the Brethren Bible School in Chicago. He graduated and went on to Bethany Bible Seminary where he earned his Master's degree. Over the next 24 years, Clarence served four churches before retirement in 1981.

"I appreciated the opportunity to be a smokejumper with CPS-103. Being part of a minority group, even with different background and religious beliefs, it is possible to share in a sincere and meaningful fellowship. My life was enriched because of the experience."

(end of excerpt)