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Smokejumper Obituary: Beasley, Ray Grady (McCall 1952)

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Smokejumper Obituary

Beasley, Ray Grady (McCall 1952)

Ray, 88, died February 1, 2018, in Helena, Montana. He was born February 1, 1930, in Denver, Colorado.

In 1948 he went into the Air Force upon graduating from high school. He was a Winter Survival Expert and trained crews for deployment to Libya and the Korean War. After his enlistment was up, Ray jumped at McCall 1952-63 and at Idaho City in 1964 and was a spotter and squadleader at both bases.

Using the G.I. Bill, he received his bachelor's degree in Zoology from the University of Idaho in 1958. Ray went to work for the CIA during the winter months. "Beas" had a long and interesting career with the CIA working in Laos, Guatemala (Bay of Pigs Operation) training Cuban paratroopers, and the Tibet airlift program. Ray co-commissioned a painting, Khampa Airlift to Tibet, which now hangs in CIA headquarters.

In 1964 Ray became a textile engineer for the USFS and his work including inventing the fire shelter and was involved in designing the fire shirts and making improvements to smokejumper parachute technology.

Ray moved to Helena in 1984 where he and his wife started the Birds & Beasley's gallery/birding store.

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