

April 2015

Smokejumper Obituary: Rungee, Fred W. (Missoula 1945)

National Smokejumper Association

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Smokejumper Obituary

Rungee, Fred W. (Missoula 1945)

Fred died March 27, 2015, at the age of 93. He was born in 1921 and drafted into CPS in 1943 from New Haven, Connecticut, where his occupation at the time was listed as "Student." Fred has seven training and five fire jumps during the 1945 season.

One of the few remaining CPS-103 jumpers, he was immensely proud of his service to his country as a conscientious objector with the fledgling smokejumpers of the Civilian Public Service program during WWII. He diligently worked toward a world at peace throughout his entire life.

As a woodsman, Fred qualified as a true Alaskan. He was an adventurer who looked comfortable in a canoe or kayak, on snowshoes or a motorcycle, helicopter, or Oldsmobile. More often than not he could be found in the woods, on foot with his double bit axe, his model 70 Winchester hunting rifle and a 60-pound pack. He was a true leader by example who, after a brief residency in Montana, made his home in Alaska where he worked for the Bureau of Land Management as the Fire Management Officer of the Glennallen District responsible for all forest fire control in that area -about the size of New York State.

Of his more than 70 years in Alaska, he resided primarily in the town of Glennallen. Upon retirement in 1978, he moved to the Slana area to a cabin that he himself built two and a half miles from the nearest road. Packing all the materials and even a massive wood stove he needed for the cabin on foot, he did concede using a buckboard to move in his piano.

(end of excerpt)