

November 2014

Smokejumper Obituary: Schmidt, Earl C. (Missoula 1943)

National Smokejumper Association

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Smokejumper Obituary

Schmidt, Earl C. (Missoula 1943)

Earl, 94, died November 5, 2014, in Lancaster, PA. He was born in Harper, Kansas, February 13, 1920. Earl grew up in a Mennonite family and was drafted into Civilian Public Service in January 1942. He was in two camps before going to Camp Paxson at Seeley Lake in April 1943 to join the CPS-103 smokejumper unit. Earl jumped all three years of the program. After his release in 1946, he worked one trip on the United Relief ships taking cattle and horses to Poland.

Earl worked 23 years for Musselman Canning in Biglerville, PA and followed that with 20 years as an insurance agent in the same area. He was active in the CPS smokejumper reunions at Oskaloosa, Iowa, in 2000, and later at Hungry Horse, MT.

It was a letter from Earl that told of Wag Dodge introducing the "escape fire" during jumper training in 1943, years ahead of its use at Mann Gulch.

(end of excerpt)