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Smokeyumper Obituary: Bassett, Richard (Pilot 0000)

National Smokeyumper Association

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Smokejumper Obituary

Bassett, Richard (Pilot 0000)

Dick, 89, died July 24, 2012, in Redmond, Oregon. He joined the Army Air Corps - which became the U.S. Air Force - in August 1941, having already learned to fly airplanes as large as the DC-3, thanks to the fact his father was chief draftsman at the Douglas Aircraft Company. Dick was flying for the predecessor to the CIA in Southeast Asia prior to World War II, piloting a PB4Y - a flying boat - with Shell Oil Company markings, keeping tabs on the Japanese fleet movements. He spent most of the war flying photo reconnaissance missions, earning several commendations for courage. Even though Dick was in the Army, Adm. William Halsey of the Navy recommended that he be awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross. Following the war, Dick was an operative in China carrying a French passport. He worked for the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, but returned to the Air Force as a communications specialist. He retired in 1965 and began flying smokejumpers from Cave Junction in 1967, later moving to Redmond. Dick, who also served on the Redmond Airport Commission, owned and flew a Cessna 310 until age 83.

(end of excerpt)