

September 2011

Smokejumper Obituary: Eicher, Maj. Gen. William (NCSB 1948)

National Smokejumper Association

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National Smokejumper Association, "Smokejumper Obituary: Eicher, Maj. Gen. William (NCSB 1948)" (2011). *Smokejumper Obituaries*. 874.
https://dc.ewu.edu/smokejumper_bios/874

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Smokejumper Obituary

Eicher, Maj. Gen. William (NCSB 1948)

Bill, 84, died May 2, 2011, at Walter Reed Army Medical Center in Washington, D.C., following a highly decorated military career. He jumped from Winthrop for the 1948 season and rejoined the Army in 1950, having served in the Army Air Forces - predecessor to the U.S. Air Force - at the end of World War II. He was a 1950 graduate of Washington State College and earned a Master's degree in Business Administration from Syracuse University in 1960. Gen. Eicher commanded a battalion in the Vietnam War and was commanding general of the Army Armament Materiel Readiness Command in the late 1970s. He was inducted into the Ordnance Hall of Fame in 1986, having streamlined a process for ammunition procurement that saved the Army hundreds of millions of dollars. Gen. Eicher received the Silver Star in 1951 while serving as a lieutenant in the Korean War. His award noted that as his platoon attacked a strongly defended hill, he repeatedly braved automatic weapons fire and "so inspired his men by his inflexible resolve that they maintained the perimeter against every hostile thrust." Gen. Eicher's other decorations included the Distinguished Service Medal, three awards of the Legion of Merit, four awards of the Bronze Star medal, the Purple Heart, the Joint Services Commendation Medal, and two Army Commendation medals. After retiring from the Army, he spent 12 years as a vice president of technical management at the American Defense Preparedness Association.

(end of excerpt)