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Smokejumper Obituary: Samsel, Gaylord Kirk (Missoula 1960)

National Smokejumper Association

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Smokejumper Obituary

Samsel, Gaylord Kirk (Missoula 1960)

Kirk, 61, of Polson, Mont., died Sept. 9, 1994 of injuries suffered in an airplane crash. He was born Aug. 14, 1933, in Missoula, MT, and attended several Montana schools before moving to Anchorage where he graduated from high school in 1953.

He was drafted into the Army and was stationed in Alaska for two years. When he was discharged, he won a Kenai Peninsula homestead in one of the last federal land lotteries in Alaska. He homesteaded in Sterling for three years before moving to Seattle. He earned an airframe and power plant license.

In 1962, he moved to Sydney, Australia, where he lived for 10 years and worked as a helicopter mechanic.

On Oct. 8, 1977, he married his high school sweetheart, Joan Matte Gates, at Blue Bay Lodge, Flat Lake, Mont. In 1983, they moved to Polson, where they built their retirement home on King's Point.

Kirk jumped at Missoula 1960-62.

(end of excerpt)