

February 2003

Smokejumper Obituary: Schlaefli, Robert P. Bob (Tanker Pilot 0000)

National Smokejumper Association

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Recommended Citation

National Smokejumper Association, "Smokejumper Obituary: Schlaefli, Robert P. Bob (Tanker Pilot 0000)" (2003). *Smokejumper Obituaries*. 1154.
https://dc.ewu.edu/smokejumper_bios/1154

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Smokejumper Obituary

Schlaefli, Robert P. Bob (Tanker Pilot 0000)

Bob, 80, passed away February 24, 2003 in Grant County, Washington. Born in Yankton, South Dakota, he graduated from Bremerton High School in 1940 and became a fighter pilot for the U.S. Army Air Corps.

Bob flew throughout his life, piloting aircraft from Alaska to Panama and from the U.S. to Europe and Africa. He pioneered scooping water with PBY Catalina aircraft and his SLAFCO tankers were well known by smokejumpers, air attack bosses and lead plane pilots especially in Alaska where he was an ever present figure on the ramp and in the daily life of the base.

Bob's flying adventures were legendary with the jumpers. He was known by the general public for piloting the PBY in the movie "Always."

He served on the board of directors of the National Air Tanker Pilots Association, was an honorary member of the Pat Wing 4 Group WW II Airdales and had recently become an NSA life member as an honor from some of his old jumper buddies. Bob is survived by his wife of 35 years, Claudette Schlaefli.

A remembrance of Bob will be published in the Fall edition of the SMOKEJUMPER

(end of excerpt)