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Smokejumper Obituary: Stokes, Walter S. (Pendleton 1945)

National Smokejumper Association

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Smokejumper Obituary

Stokes, Walter S. (Pendleton 1945)

Walter (Buddy) Smith Stokes, 72, of Tampa, Fla. and Great Falls, Mont. died of cancer at Walter Reed Army Medical Center, Washington, D.C., on Oct. 11, 2002.

Born in Louisville, Ky. on July 5, 1930, he joined the U.S. Army at age 14 and was a smokejumper with the 555th Parachute Infantry Battalion (The "Triple Nickles") when it was deployed to the Northwest in 1945 to fight wildfires and those ignited by Japanese balloon bombs.

A veteran of World War II, Korea and Vietnam, Walter was awarded a Silver Star and a Purple Heart. He retired from the Air Force in 1972 and went on to retire from Federal Civil Service. He then volunteered in various community programs, was the sergeant-at-arms of the Tampa Bay Chapter of the 82nd Airborne Division Association, a member of the Fraternal Order of Police, the VFW, and a life member of the Triple Nickle Association.

(end of excerpt)