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Smokejumper Obituary: Smith, Mike Ray (Missoula 1969)

National Smokejumper Association

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Smokejumper Obituary

Smith, Mike Ray (Missoula 1969)

Mike died June 21, 1995, when the Forest Service Beechcraft Baron lead plane that he was piloting collided with a DC-4 retardant plane. Both aircraft were on final approach to the airport at Ramona, CA. He was born February 27, 1948, in Missoula, Montana. He was the son of pioneer smokejumper Glenn Smith. Mike began his Forest Service career in 1966 as a lookout on the St Joe N.F. He followed that up in with seasonal employment on Helitack and Hotshot crews in Arizona and California.

Mike joined the rookie smokejumper class in Missoula the summer of 1969. He jumped for three seasons with 21 fire jumps out of Missoula, Grangeville, Fairbanks, Silver City and other bases.

Mike began his permanent employment with the USFS in the early 70s as a dispatcher on the Coronado N.F. In 1975 he moved to the Sequoia N.F. as a helitack foreman and continued on the Sequoia N.F. until 1992 in various positions including, Fire Prevention, Fire Management Officer, and Law Enforcement.

(end of excerpt)