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Smokejumper Obituary: Buzzard, Baynard Stanley (North Cascades 1965)

National Smokejumper Association

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Smokejumper Obituary

Buzzard, Baynard Stanley (North Cascades 1965)

Baynard died July 29, 2024, at his home in Wasilla, Alaska. He was born August 30, 1944, in Omak, Washington. He grew up on the family ranch 10 miles west of Okanogan and graduated from Okanogan H.S. Baynard attended Big Bend Community College and Central Washington University. He joined the United States Navy in 1966.

My Navy tour was from 1966 to Aug. 1970. I went to NAS Lakehurst, N.J., for riggers school. I graduated first of 39 with the highest final score since the school's inception in the 1920s. I was discharged from the Navy on my birthday, Aug. 30, 1970.

Prior to his Navy tour, he was hired by USFS Winthrop R.D. in March of 1963. In March 1965, I was notified I had been hired as a rookie for the 1965 season. In 1965, I had seven fire jumps and 17 total jumps for the season. I jumped the 1966 season and got 12 fire jumps. Between 1965 and 1979, Baynard jumped for 11 years, making 253 jumps, including 87 fires. Baynard was a Supervisory Smokejumper/Spotter and Parachute Loft Foreman responsible for several smokejumper equipment-related innovations and program improvements during his tenure. After his smokejumper career, Baynard was the Fire Management Officer in the Chelan Ranger District, Wenatchee National Forest.

On January 72, I returned to college at CWSC Ellensburg, Washington. I graduated from college with a bachelor's in outdoor recreation in 1973.

On July 21, I was aboard the BLM DC-3 when Gene Hobbs (IDC-61) was jerked out the door, and his backpack spotter's chute came open. I was about 8 feet from him when it occurred. It happened so fast no one had time to say or do anything. In 1974, all NCSB overhead helped train the Canadian smokejumpers, and I was selected as loft foreman.

In 1975, I helped with Canadian jumper training. I had five fire jumps and a total of 31 jumps in 1975. That was when hiring for the USFS started going downhill and has gotten steadily worse. I quit the USFS and went to work for myself. That's when my real career started, excavating, and it lasted 40 years. I learned a lot, and my three sons have learned a lot. The youngest is now running the business. In the 40 years, we excavated between 700 and 800 foundations, mostly in the Methow Valley. Baynard jumped at NSCB 1965-66 and 1971-79.

(end of excerpt)