

Biographical Data for John Emil Partanen

Born in Telluride (Museum) Hospital, March 30, 1917

Parents: Isak Partanen and Hilja Tolonen Partanen

Isak Partanen was born in Utajarvi Parish, Finland, 1887. Came to Telluride in 1916, worked at Liberty Bell Mine as Mine Superintendent. Served with the Corps of Engineers, U. S. Army, 1918-1919 (Master Sergeant) Returned to Telluride Sept. 1919. Worked at the Liberty Bell, the Black Bear, and at the Smuggler-Union for Veta Mines as Mining Engineer. Left Telluride August 1936. Died in Oakland, California in 1973.

Hilja Tolonen Partanen was born in Oulu, Finland in 1887. Her mother and father immigrated to the U. S. in 1892 and she grew up in Hancock, Michigan. Married Isak Partanen in May, 1916. She returned to Hancock during her husband's service with the U. S. Army. Left Telluride August 1936. Died in San Francisco, California, April, 1943.

John Emil Partanen graduated from Telluride High School in May 1935. Worked as a mucker at the Smuggler-Union mine during the summer of 1935 (Pennsylvania Tunnel). Worked in the Smuggler-Union mill during the summer of 1936. Left Telluride Sept. 1936 to attend college. Graduated from the University of Arizona, College of Mines, in 1940. Served with the U. S. Army (Second and First Lieutenant) June 1941 to Jan. 1943. Served with U. S. Army Air Force (First Lieutenant and Captain) Jan. 1943 to Jan. 1946. Overseas service in China as a Surveying Engineer (1944) and in Santiago, Chile, as a Geodetic Control Officer with the Chilean Instituto Geografica Militar (liaison duty) (1945). Released from active duty March 1946. Recalled to active duty with the U. S. Air Force, March 1948, assigned to Directorate of Operational Requirements, Headquarters, U. S. Air Force, Washington, D. C. with oversight in aeronautical charting. Transferred to Air Research and Development Command, Baltimore, Maryland in June 1952 with oversight in R and D in the field of photo intelligence. Released from active duty in the rank of Major in Nov. 1954. Staff Cartographer, Aeronautical Chart Center, St. Louis, Missouri, Dec. 1954 to July 1957. First visit to Telluride August 1957 enroute to Southern California to go to work for North American Aviation. Employed by Lockheed Missile and Space Company Feb. 1958. Assigned to the CORONA Program developing the nation's first reconnaissance satellite as systems engineer and technical director for the cameras and film recovery payload from 1959 to 1966. Retired from the U. S. Air Force Reserve, rank of Lt. Col, 1968. Reassigned from CORONA and worked on remote earth imaging by radar altimetry, radar scatterometry, and radiometry. Also worked on underwater ocean imagery using cameras, television, and sonar. Developed a photogrammetric method to map the topography of stealth naval vessels to an accuracy in the range of one thousandth of an inch. My last assignment before retiring in 1992 was project engineer for the imaging systems (optical and radiometric) of a weather satellite.

Marriage: Married Alice Alyne Camp in Phoenix, Arizona on Nov. 10, 1940. Deceased Sept. 1, 1994.

Children: Alice Elizabeth Partanen, Branch Supervisor, Western Marketing Alliance.

John Eric Partanen, Chemist, Santa Maria Refining Company

Robert Carl Partanen, Systems Analyst, Pacific Bell Telephone Company

Honors: Bronze Star Medal for meritorious service in China in 1944. Space Pioneer Medal awarded to 114 persons in recognition of the achievements of the CORONA development team, August 18, 1985, by order of President Ronald Reagan. Silver Beaver Award, Boy Scouts of America. in recognition of service with the Santa Clara County Council (California), January 1990.