

August 2020

Smokejumper Obituary: Moffett, Richard Norton (Missoula 1942)

National Smokejumper Association

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Recommended Citation

National Smokejumper Association, "Smokejumper Obituary: Moffett, Richard Norton (Missoula 1942)" (2020). *Smokejumper Obituaries*. 446.
https://dc.ewu.edu/smokejumper_bios/446

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Smokejumper Obituary

Moffett, Richard Norton (Missoula 1942)

Richard Norton Moffett, Sr. was born February 17, 1907, in East Kamiah, Idaho, on the Nez Perce Indian Reservation, the son of a noted Nez Perce Indian Presbyterian minister. Richard was seven-eighths Native American and a member of the Nez Perce Indian Tribe. He attended the Fort Lapwai Indian School on the Nez Perce Reservation. By 1930, he was working for the Forest Service as a laborer and in 1932 he married a fellow Nez Perce and they had ten children.

On May 20, 1942, Richard reported to the old CCC station at Nine Mile where he began smokejumper training and making training jumps at the nearby Six Mile airfield. Fellow trainees were Arild C. Nielsen, Roy Mattson, Karl Nussbacher, Earl Cooley, John J. Beck, and Richard McClung from Missoula, John Nash from Hamilton, and James Cochran from Kooskia, Idaho. The following month, he was assigned to the Moose Creek RD, Bitterroot NF.

In April 1944 he enlisted in the U.S. Navy and after a short enlistment, was released in November 1945 based on family dependency. Richard died in Kamiah on October 12, 1982, at the age of 75. He is buried at the Nikesa Cemetery in Kamiah, Idaho.

(end of excerpt)