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## Smokejumper Obituary: Cooley, Earl E. (Missoula 1940)

National Smokejumper Association

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# Smokejumper Obituary

## Cooley, Earl E. (Missoula 1940)

Earl, 98, died November 9, 2009, at his home in Missoula. He graduated from Corvallis (Montana) High School in 1930 and started Forestry School at the University of Montana in 1937 graduating in 1941. Earl was a member of the first smokejumper group trained in 1940 at Seeley Lake, MT. There were seven trainees selected from Region 1. One fail his physical, the other dropped out leaving four trainees in at Seeley Lake. Rufus Robinson completed his training earlier at Winthrop. Earl completed his training with seven jumps.

On July 12, 1940, he and Rufus Robinson made the first fire jumps in U.S. history on the Marten Creek Fire on the Nez Perce NF.

Earl started work as a District Ranger on the Nez Perce NF in 1950 and returned to Missoula as Smokejumper Base Superintendent in 1958. In 1971 he became a Regional Equipment Specialist retiring in 1975 to pursue a career in Real Estate.

Earl was founder and past president of the National Smokejumper Association.

*(end of excerpt)*