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Smokejumper Obituary: Brown, James (Missoula 1946)

National Smokejumper Association

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Smokejumper Obituary

Brown, James (Missoula 1946)

Jim died May 31, 2007, in Sandpoint, Idaho. As a young man he spent summers employed by the Forest Service doing Blister Rust control, mapping, surveying, cruising timber and firefighting. He graduated with a forestry degree from Washington State College in 1939 and worked as an asbestos worker in Alaska in 1940.

With such an extensive background, he was accepted for smokejumper training in 1941 but that was delayed by WWII when he worked on the "Manhattan Project."

When he started jumping in 1946, Jim jokes that Earl (Cooley) appointed him superintendent of firewood. In addition to splitting the firewood, his job as to get up very early and have the massive-iron cook stove hot and ready for the cook at the Nine Mile Camp.

At the urging of Earl Cooley, Jim took the Civil Service Forester exam and was offered work with the Forest Service at the professional level. However, the construction industry was booming in Alaska and Jim opted to set up his own company in that state.

In 1964 Jim established the 2,000 acre Homestead Ranch in the Pack River Valley near Sandpoint. He spent the remainder of his life on this property. He also owned land in Idaho, Washington and Alaska. Jim loved flying and flew for many years in Alaska.

(end of excerpt)