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**Harald “Pop” Sorensen**  
Born: 1905      Died: ?

*Harald “Pop” Sorensen was born in Asker, Norway, in 1905, and began skiing at an early age. He became one of this country’s most popular skiing figures. He was a rugged competitor with an enviable string of achievements in the classic nordic events, and a top-flight instructor in recreational and competitive skiing.*



Harald (Pop) Sorensen’s imposing record perhaps has no parallel in ski sport over six decades...he started almost in his infancy in Asker, Norway. Former combined and champion “rider” for the Norsemen Ski Club, one of the founding organizations of the United States Eastern Amateur Ski Association; then the Norfolk Winter Sports Association of Connecticut, and then a career in Uncle Sam’s Army in 1941.

While his imposing competitive record reads like a “Who’s Who” in international skiing, the ever-congenial and well-liked Sorensen’s charm, wit, and enthusiasm transmitted the “greatest love possible” that of skiing. It helped mould such illustrious ski jumpers as Torger Tøkle, Art Devlin, Jay Rand, and the Perry-Smith brothers.

At Winter Park, Colorado, this powerful and ever-graceful “flyer” taught hundreds of youngsters in the Denver Post-winter Ski School. Free to kids from 4 to 18, Pop’s ski school for jumpers took place on an amazing complex of nine hills, each higher, until a 60-meter slide provides the finishing touches for the more expert.

To culminate his achievements, Sorensen in 1971 received two of skisport’s most outstanding awards. They were the Russell Wilder Memorial “in recognition of the year’s most outstanding activity in focusing the interests of America’s youth on the sport of skiing,” presented by the United States Ski Association; and the Halstad Memorial Award, the highest honor given by the Rocky Mountain Division “to the individual who has done the most for skiing during the year.”

Harald came to this country in 1929. He thrilled literally millions throughout North America and Europe with his achievements.

Twice he was a member of the National Ski Association’s All-American Jumping team; and captured the Eastern, New York State, New England, Northwest and a host of the other crowns; cracked hill records at Norem, Bear Mountain, Staten Island, Brattleboro, Norway Ski club and Rumford slides; twice finished runner-up in Class “A” Nationals; and was picked for the Germany, since he didn’t have his citizen papers yet.

Then, followed his dynamic army career for Uncle Sam. He taught the Eastern experimental ski patrol at Old Forge, NY, continued to instruct the 87<sup>th</sup> Regiment, the Second Division, and was one of 20 American instructors attached to the British Mountain School, teaching skiing to all the allied forces in Italy.

Pop became a National Jumping Judge in 1937, and coached the U.S. Ski Team in the World Nordic Championships at Lake Placid in 1950; was Olympic jump coach for this country in 1952 at Oslo, Norway; was a certified ski instructor since 1946. He taught hundreds of children the art of ski jumping while serving as civilian instructor to the Army.

Harald started skiing when he could just about walk so he could get to school in Vollen in Asker. Then came competition at 13 triumphs at Hyttli Hill, outside Oslo; he won many junior meets, then advanced to Class “A”, placing second in tryouts for the world-famous Holmenkollen, 1/10<sup>th</sup> point behind the fabulous Sigmund Ruud; placed third in the Holmenkollen, third in the Norwegian Nationals, third in the Swedish Nationals besides combined laurels in Finland, Norway, and Sweden before continuing his awesome career, both as a competitor and gentleman, in this country in 1929.

Harald Sorensen had a ever-smiling face and helpful manner, a “Norke,” who earned his niche in the ski world and was elected to the U.S. National Ski Hall of Fame in 1973.