



# Journal of the New England Ski Museum

Winter 2017

Issue Number 103

## Cannon Mountain on the World Stage: North America's First World Cup, 1967

*By Jeff Leich*



*Dorothy I. Crossley, New England Ski Museum*

*The view from Killy's Corner during the downhill includes some of the thousands of cars parked along Route 3.*

Fifty years ago, on March 10, 11, & 12, 1967, the first World Cup ski race held on the North American continent took place at Cannon Mountain, attracting some of the best ski racers in the world while drawing large crowds of spectators and abundant coverage in the press. World Cup events continued to be scheduled in the eastern US from 1969 until 1991, with 11 held at Waterville Valley and others at Sugarloaf, Stratton and Killington, but not until the 2016 Thanksgiving World Cup at Killington, when the two-day event drew 16,000 and 13,000 spectators<sup>1</sup>, did American audiences in the numbers that Cannon hosted in 1967 view a World Cup. With the enthusiasm evidenced at the Killington races, and the comeback of Cannon's neighboring area Mittersill as a USSA training site, a glance back at the part that Cannon played in the first World Cup season can provide some historical context and nostalgic interest.

With the Winter Olympic Games held every four years and the International Ski Federation (FIS) World Championships on a two-year rotation, international skiing had no culminating competition in the intervening years. The French sports newspaper *L'Equipe* and their advertiser Evian water sponsored the multi-stage Tour de France, and the two firms became interested in sponsoring a similar ski event. In the winter of 1966, they introduced the Challenge *L'Equipe*, a ski race series held in the Alpine countries which became better known at the Europa Cup.<sup>2</sup> At the event at Kitzbühl that year, sports writer Serge Lang of *L'Equipe* discussed expanding the Europa Cup with Bob Beattie, US Ski Team alpine director, and French national ski director Honoré Bonnet, specifically using the term World Cup.<sup>3</sup>

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# New England Ski Museum

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## Mission

New England Ski Museum collects, conserves, and exhibits elements of ski history for the purposes of research, education, and inspiration.

Specifically, the Museum:

- ❖ collects and preserves examples of ski equipment, clothing, art, and ephemera;
- ❖ collects and preserves photographic records, films, and historic documents of skiing;
- ❖ maintains a reference library of ski literature, including books and periodicals;
- ❖ collects and preserves memorabilia of the 10th Mountain Division;
- ❖ maintains an oral history library of notable skiers;
- ❖ provides exhibitions about the history of skiing and its importance to social and economic development; and
- ❖ provides education programs for its community.

## Paul Valar Society

### Have you considered including New England Ski Museum in your estate plan?

By including a financial bequest to the Museum in their estate planning, Paul Valar Society members continue the Museum's mission to preserve the history and heritage of skiing beyond their lifetime. The Society takes its name from Paul Valar, the charismatic and influential ski school director and coach who was the first president of the New England Ski Museum.

If you have made provision for the Museum in your planning, we would appreciate knowing that so we can thank you. Bequests need not meet any particular threshold, and the amount of the bequest need not be shared with the Museum. If you are considering such a step in concert with your financial advisor, a Museum board member or senior staffer can provide more information.

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*Journal of the  
New England Ski Museum*

is published in March, June, September and December and sent as a benefit to all members.

We welcome your questions, comments, and letters.

Jeff Leich, Editor

*Graphic Design by Sherwin Dodge Printers, Littleton, NH*

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Our project to expand the New England Ski Museum to North Conway is really taking shape. The enthusiasm exhibited has been outstanding and from all of us on the capital campaign committee and the board of directors of the ski museum, our heartfelt thanks. This project has brought together a great mix of supporters from across the country

and especially the Mount Washington Valley.

So where do we stand? As of this date we have raised more than \$1.1 million towards our goal of \$1.7 million, or two-thirds of the way! The capital campaign committee has been hard at work securing donations from individuals, businesses and foundations. This “quiet” phase of the campaign has been exciting and gratifying for us to see the outpouring of support for a North Conway branch of the New England Ski Museum that will be a great addition to our Franconia based museum. We cannot thank you enough.

We are now entering the more public phase of the campaign. There are a series of events taking place this winter and throughout the summer and fall. These events are listed on the ski museum website, [newenglandskimuseum.org/calendar](http://newenglandskimuseum.org/calendar). Please join us at these events if you can, we’d love to see you. Check back regularly as we are adding more all the time. We also have large banners, brochures and donor cards at a number of regional ski areas for the remainder of the winter. Our “Downhill Divas” committee is organizing fundraising events at local restaurants throughout the Mount Washington Valley.

The building committee is close to concluding the design process with our design team at HER Associates. We anticipate outdoor construction activities to begin shortly and we are still on target for opening by the end of the year. I can honestly say this museum will be truly one-of-a-kind.

So thank you all. Your support means so much. Please feel free to contact us if you have any questions.



*Bob Beattie, standing in the center, was US alpine director and a collaborator with Serge Lang in the founding of the World Cup.*

*Dorothy I. Crossley, New England Ski Museum*

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*French journalist Serge Lang was the early advocate of a World Cup of Skiing series.*

*Continued from page 1*

The idea was crystalized at the only FIS Alpine Ski World Championships ever to be held in the southern hemisphere, at Portillo, Chile in the summer of 1966. Lang, Beattie, Bonnet and Austrian ski association figure Sepp Sulzberger refined the idea in a series of evening meetings in the remote hotel in the Andes where the event was held, with the isolation a key feature of the ultimate adoption of the concept, according to Lang:

“The Southern Cross was our lucky stars (sic). If the World Championships had been awarded to a more traditional venue...our proposal for a World Cup...would not have overcome the opposition of conservative voices in skiing. But in Portillo, they were of no consequence. The potential political opponents did not come.”<sup>4</sup>

Despite the forebodings of Bob Beattie that the FIS would not support the race series, FIS President Marc Hodler spent only a short time reviewing the proposal before approving it. “And so,” Lang recalled, “in the heart of the Andes, thousands of miles from the Alps, the old calendar of ski racing died on August 11, 1966.”<sup>5</sup>

With only months to arrange the race series ahead of the 1966-67 ski season, resorts were chosen in Europe and the US that had established track records of hosting major ski competitions. In Europe, Mégevè, France; Adelboden, Switzerland; Kitzbühl, Austria; Berchtesgaden, Germany; and Sestriere, Italy were chosen. American venues would be Cannon Mountain, Vail, and Jackson Hole.

Cannon had hosted the North American Alpine Championships in March, 1966, and had a reprise of that competition on its 1967 calendar, and perhaps that presented the World Cup organizers a quickly-arranged opportunity to graft their American debut onto an existing event. It may be that Cannon was selected over other New England mountains like Mount Mansfield, which had held its own international races in 1966 that attracted high-caliber Europeans including Jean-Claude Killy and Guy Périllat, because Bob Beattie, present at the creation of the World Cup, was a New Hampshire native. Certainly the willingness to host the event on the part of Cannon and the Eastern Interclub Ski League (EICSL), a collaborative of some 53 ski clubs active in New England which had organized the 1966 North Americans, was a factor.<sup>6</sup>

Cannon had developed a downhill course, incorporating the existing Cannon ski trails Vista Way, Bypass, Avalanche Extension and Avalanche. Called C-93, the name of the course was meant as a nod to the new ski area marketing organization White Mountains 93 Association, better known as Ski 93, which represented five ski areas—Tenney Mountain, Loon Mountain, Waterville Valley, Cannon and Mittersill—strung along the new Interstate highway 93 then inching its way north to ski country from Boston.

The downhill course was designed by Cannon patrol director and trail crew chief Austin (Sonny) Macaulay, with the ski area committing \$12,000 to the project. Willy Schaeffler, the American FIS authority on alpine course certification, had seen the course in February 1966 ahead of the 1966 races, and had advised the organizers that sections of the course should be widened to FIS



Dorothy I. Crossley, New England Ski Museum

*Bill Kempton of Eastern Interclub Ski League was chief of race for the events.*

standards before it was used as a downhill, and based on that, the 1966 North Americans did not hold a downhill. Over the summer Vista Way was widened and several tree islands removed from it; Bypass was widened through blasting, and the turn from Bypass onto Avalanche, which would soon be known as Killy's corner, also widened. A short extension from the bottom of Avalanche to the path of old Route 18 was cut to bring the vertical drop of the course to 2,130 feet. Schaeffler viewed the proposed downhill in the fall of 1967 and gave his approval.<sup>7</sup>

John W. King, governor of New Hampshire since 1963, instigator of the state's first in the nation lottery, pledged in his 1966 re-election campaign to support the World Cup at Cannon with state funds. Once reelected, he convinced the legislature to appropriate \$41,779 to the effort; accounting for inflation, that figure would exceed \$298,000 in 2017.<sup>8</sup> As in 1966, the race would be organized by personnel from EICSL, whose two chief race officials were Bill Kempton of Lynn, Massachusetts, and Paul R. Parker of Roslindale. EICSL committed some \$20,000 to the effort, which they expected to recoup through the sale of TV rights to CBS, which would broadcast the races. Another \$15,000 was expected to be donated by area businesses to cover the costs of housing, meals and expenses of teams from afar.

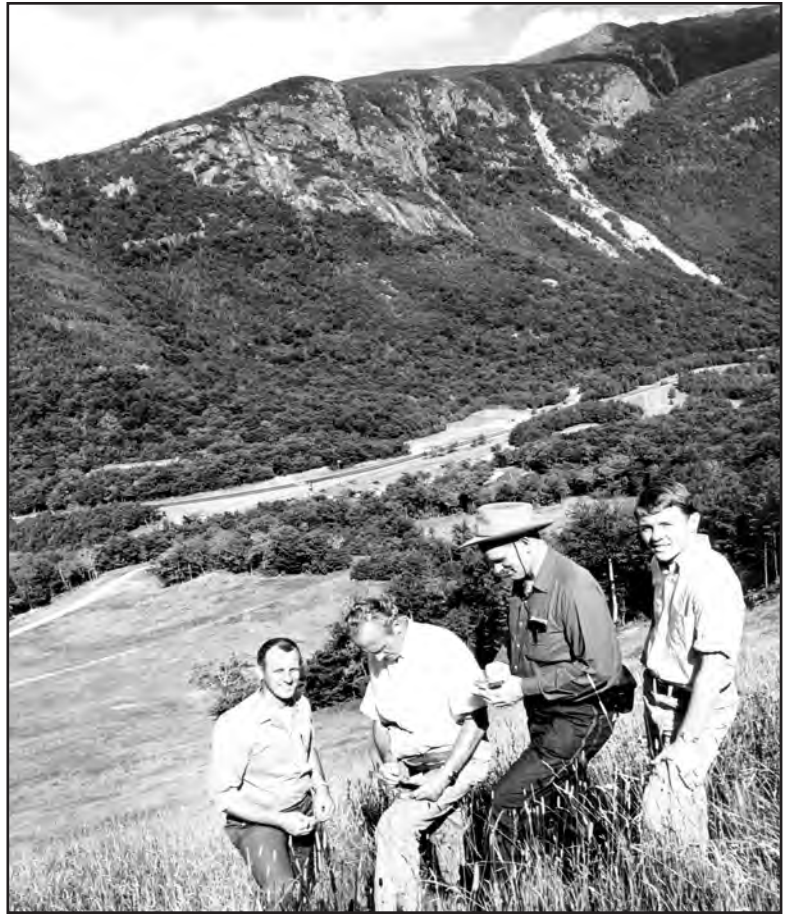
The details of preparation for the event were daunting for Cannon and the state. Cannon's manager Bill Norton was the lead contact for the mountain, with Newt Avery and Sonny Macaulay as his chief lieutenants. Avery had been on staff since the opening of the Aerial Tramway in 1938, and Macaulay had hired on in 1940.

A Governor's coordinating committee made up of personnel from a variety of state agencies including the Division of Parks, Department of Economic Development, Department of Safety, Public Works and Highways, and the Attorney General's office worked with EICSL representatives to oversee the budget established for state funds in the run-up to the events. In the \$41,799 budget appropriated by the general court, the largest line items were \$5,000 for insurance, and \$5,000 for a film of the events.<sup>9</sup>

The budget items for the documentary film and a portion of the insurance budget soon fell victim to the minimal state of snow cover on the courses near the end of February, as a temporary snowmaking system became a priority. On February 19, Sel Hannah, Newt Avery, Sonny Macaulay, Ken Boothroyd and Doc Sosman concluded that portions of the downhill, especially Avalanche, needed much more additional snow than the ongoing efforts to shovel it out of the woods could provide. Hannah was aware that Charles Skinner, owner of Sugar Hills ski area in Grand Rapids, Minnesota could provide a makeshift system quickly. Skinner (who would become the president of Sugarloaf in the 1970s and purchased Lutsen in 1980)<sup>10</sup> was willing and able to comply. The plan included using firetrucks and fire hose to pump water from Echo Lake, with air compressors rented from highway contractors. The system, the first snowmaking ever installed at Cannon, arrived and was set up and the snow cover improved, not only from its production but from a winter storm that brought some 14 inches of snow at the same time.<sup>11</sup>

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*Bill Kempton, left, Willie Schaeffler, Leland "Doc" Sosman and Ned McSherry inspect the downhill course in the summer of 1966.*



*Dorothy I. Crossley, New England Ski Museum*



*Dorothy I. Crossley, New England Ski Museum*

*VW microbuses were used to transport the European teams from the airport to Franconia.*

*Billboards advertising the World Cup events were placed on major New Hampshire highways leading north.*



*Dorothy I. Crossley, New England Ski Museum*



*Dorothy I. Crossley, New England Ski Museum*

*Dick Hamilton, right, the director of Ski 93, was deeply involved in event preparations.*





The Austrian ski team stayed at the Mittersill Inn. Baron Hubert von Pantz, second from the right, is depicted in this photo with the team.

A temporary snowmaking system was set up on Avalanche when it seemed there might not be enough snow for the event.





*The temporary pressroom was set up in the basement of the Tramway valley station.*



*Canada's Nancy Greene in the slalom, in which she was disqualified.*

*Crowds lined the courses during all three events.*



*Dorothy I. Crossley, New England Ski Museum*

*Continued from page 6*

Housing for the overseas teams was spread throughout the Franconia area. Mittersill with its Austrian provenance and architecture was the natural spot for that national team, which was warmly welcomed by owner and founder Baron Hubert von Pantz. The Italians lodged at the Horse and Hound Inn in Bethlehem, and the Germans were somewhat farther away at the Wayside Inn in Bethlehem, and the French, ultimately victorious in the men's events, were at Lovett's Inn several miles down the hill from Cannon. The Continental 93 motel accommodated the Canadians, while the Swiss were at Raynor's Motor Inn. The 43 members of the US team were scattered in 14 private homes of Franconia residents.<sup>12</sup>

One reason for the state's willingness to budget for the event was their awareness of how far-reaching the press attention would be. At an October 1966 planning meeting held at the Eastern Slope Inn in North Conway, Bob Beattie stressed that the press pool was accustomed to good treatment when covering golf, football and other sports with bigger budgets. At Stowe the year before, despite the best efforts of Sepp Ruschp to provide red carpet treatment for the press, reserved parking spaces for reporters lacked an attendant, so that the *Sports Illustrated* and *New York Times* reporters had no place to park. Getting the small details like that right would go a long way to smoothing press relations. A press room was set up in the plain but functional basement of the Tramway valley station with desks, typewriters, TV monitors and telephones. Its chief recommendation was its proximity to the finish line timing apparatus, so phone lines could be run directly to the press room.<sup>13</sup> It fell to the new director of Ski 93, Dick Hamilton, to arrange housing for the 83 press personnel attending.

The European teams, after competing in the Arlberg-Kandahar in Sestriere, Italy, flew to New York on Tuesday March 7, then on to Boston where they were driven to Manchester for the night. Arriving in Franconia on March 8, they had two days of downhill training before competition.<sup>14</sup> The weather was warm and the snow soft for Friday's downhill and the giant slalom on Saturday. Anticipating the arrival of a cold front, course workers on Saturday afternoon ski-packed the corn snow on Paulie's and Avalanche, and Sunday's slalom races had a fast, durable surface that Joe Cushing described as "side-stepped ice." "The course was absolutely perfect," Cushing recalled. "Number 50 still had a good course to race."<sup>15</sup>

All year the French men's team been the masters of the World cup circuit, and the story stayed the same in Franconia. Jean-Claude Killy and teammate Guy Périllat took first and second places with times of 1:29:03 and 1:29:91, respectively. The surprise in the men's downhill was American Jim Barrows of Steamboat Springs, who finished in third, 12/100ths behind Périllat. Other American finishers whose names may be recognizable to today's New England skiers included Bill Marolt (19<sup>th</sup>), Spider Sabich (21<sup>st</sup>), Jimmy Heuga (31<sup>st</sup>), Duncan Cullman (38<sup>th</sup>), John Clough (39<sup>th</sup>), Roger Buchika (43<sup>rd</sup>), Hank Kashiwa (44<sup>th</sup>), and Bill McCollum (53<sup>rd</sup>).

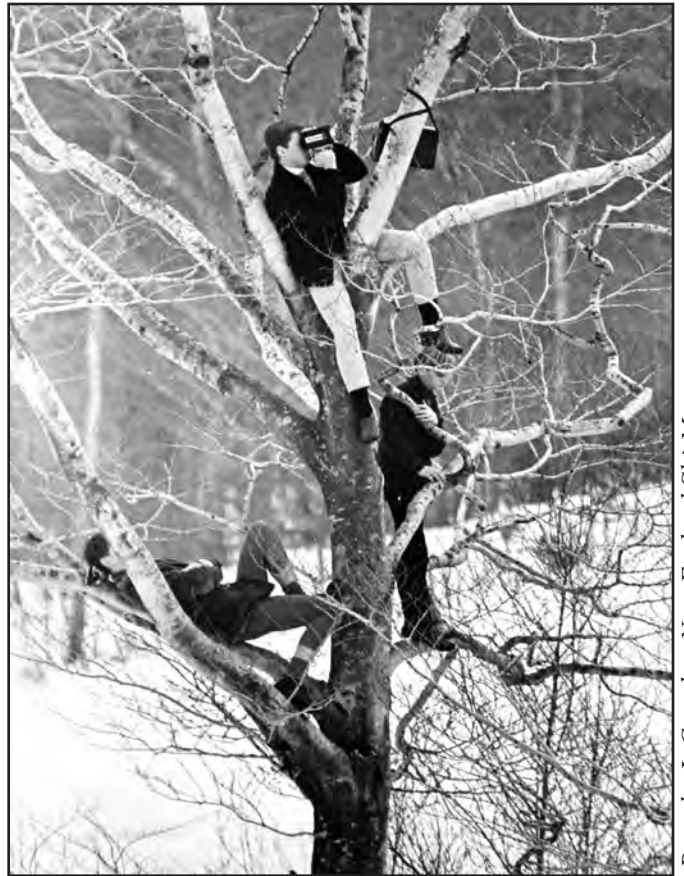
The French women were equally dominant in the downhill, though one of their best racers, Marielle Goitschel, fell in her run, then lingered beside the course until the men's run, during which she skied on and off the course, infuriating technical director Willy Schaeffler. For the second day in a row, the minutes of the jury note that "it was called to the attention of the French Coaches of an infringement and unsportsmanlike conduct of some of their

*Continued on page 14*



Dorothy I. Crossley, New England Ski Museum

*Cannon Mountain general manager Bill Norton caught a few minutes between crises to read the Sunday cartoon section.*



Dorothy I. Crossley, New England Ski Museum

*Even the trees provided space for spectators.*



Dorothy I. Crossley, New England Ski Museum

*U.S. racer Jimmy Huega's lightning second run in the slalom earned him a second place finish.*



Dorothy I. Crossley, New England Ski Museum

*Local racer Duncan Cullman in the giant slalom.*



*Nancy Greene was the ultimate winner of the women's overall World Cup, but she would not clinch it until the last run of the last slalom of the series in Jackson Hole.*

*Marielle Goitschel in the slalom, which she won.*





*Jean-Claude Killy in the Giant Slalom.*

team.”<sup>16</sup> *Sports Illustrated* was less reserved: “Marielle conducted herself at Franconia with all the feminine grace of an irritable truck driver in a roadside tavern.”<sup>17</sup>

The soft snow conditions for Sunday’s giant slalom made for a poor showing for the US men, with fully twelve racers in the Did Not Finish column. Ken Phelps in 17<sup>th</sup> was the highest American finisher. The French took the top two places in the men’s and women’s GS, with Killy in first in the men’s.

The slalom course on Sunday was much more favorable for the US skiers. Rosie Fortna was 4<sup>th</sup>, Penny McCoy 5<sup>th</sup>, and Suzy Chaffee 7<sup>th</sup>. The unfortunate exception was Karen Budge, who had just won the combined in the US National Championships, who fell in the slalom and broke a leg. The French women took the top three places, led by Marielle Goitschel in first.<sup>18</sup>

It was in the men’s slalom that the only crack in Killy’s total dominance of the three events occurred. Killy was ahead of Jimmy Huega by nearly a second after the first run. The flip of the start positions for the second run put Huega running first, and skiing “with the grace of a jungle cat and the speed of a turkey through a cornfield,” in the odd metaphor of *Ski Week*, he recorded the fastest time of the run, three-quarters of a second faster than Killy. Killy’s second run was only 7<sup>th</sup> fastest, but his first run’s margin was enough to give him the win, and complete his sweep of all three men’s events.<sup>19</sup>

An awards banquet was held on Saturday night at Franconia College, now long gone, at which former governor Sherman Adams gave a welcoming speech and New Hampshire Olympians Penny Pitou Zimmerman and Gordi Eaton awarded trophies for the downhill and giant slalom. Slalom awards were presented Sunday night at a final dinner held at the Horse and Hound Inn. This capped an intense round of parties and receptions that included an Eastern Ski Writers buffet dinner at the Tram valley station on March 9, a reception for the racers courtesy of Governor King and the State of New Hampshire on the 10<sup>th</sup> at the Mittersill Inn, and a private reception for the teams and officials by *Ski Magazine* at the Mittersill Inn before the banquet on the 11<sup>th</sup>.<sup>20</sup> The social whirl around the World Cup at Mittersill Inn represented a last hurrah

for the original hotel, as it was due to be demolished and replaced in the upcoming summer.<sup>21</sup>

State police officials estimated the crowds of spectators numbered some 5,000 on Friday, 10,000 Saturday, and 15,000 on Sunday. Despite the months of planning, there were complications, most notably long lift lines. Advance planning could provide trailers for offices and wax rooms for visiting teams, banks of desks and telephones for the press, and temporary snowmaking, but new ski lifts could not be part of the event preparation. Many first-time visitors to Cannon were not aware of the Peabody base area north of the Tramway, resulting in long lines there. An interesting perspective on the international aspect of the event came from a reporter from the *Maine Sunday Telegram*. At the time, Maine was considering a bid for the 1976 Winter Olympics, and some in the state paid close attention to the events at Cannon as a potential preview of that even larger organizing effort. “Considering the extra load, mountain personnel and the many officials imported for the occasion did a magnificent job. But there was one illustration after another of the effort—and expense—involved in keeping things running even relatively smoothly at races of this caliber,” noted Fran Sayward.<sup>22</sup>

The racers departed New Hampshire for Vail on March 13, and then went on to the World Cup finals at Jackson Hole on March 24-26. In marked contrast to the widely anticipated results of the men’s events—Killy would ultimately win with the maximum possible number of points—the women’s overall winner was not decided until the final run of the final slalom. Canadian Nancy Greene, whose best finish in Franconia was third in the giant slalom, edged out Marielle Goitschel to become the first women’s World Cup champion.<sup>23</sup> Less than eight months after the World Cup concept was formalized in Portillo, the first season concluded in Jackson Hole with a raucous party in the Cowboy Bar.<sup>24</sup>

At Cannon Mountain, the events left exhilaration and a certain level of exhaustion in its wake. Governor King declared that the mountain’s downhill trail would henceforth be known as The Killy Racing Trail.<sup>25</sup> If that gubernatorial decree ever made a ripple at the mountain, it was as short-lived as the C-93 trail name. What did prove long lasting were the memories of the events, still alive today in the minds of some who were among the thousands who watched the first World Cup held in North America.



“Two Kings,” photographer Dottie Crossley captioned this photo of Governor John King and Jean-Claude Killy at the awards banquet.

## Endnotes

<sup>1</sup> Cat Viglienzoni, “Killington World Cup breaks attendance records,” <http://www.wcax.com/story/33802144/killington-world-cup-breaks-attendance-records>, accessed 1-22-2017.

<sup>2</sup> John Fry, *The Story of Modern Skiing*. (Hanover: University Press of New England, 2006), 133.

<sup>3</sup> Serge Lang, “How the World Cup Began,” *Skiing Heritage*, 20, 3, September 2008, 9.

<sup>4</sup> Lang, “How the World Cup Began,” 10.

<sup>5</sup> Lang, “How the World Cup Began,” 9.

<sup>6</sup> Meghan McCarthy McPhaul, *A History of Cannon Mountain: Trails, Tales and Skiing Legends*. (Charleston, SC: History Press, 2011), 110.

<sup>7</sup> “New Hampshire Pledges Support to Off-Year Olympic Ski Race at Cannon Mountain,” New Hampshire Division of Parks News Release, December 8, 1966, New England Ski Museum collection 1989L.002.001. Letter, William R. Kempton, Race Chairman, to Gloria Chadwick, USSA, February 24, 1966, “North American Alpine Championships 1966,” folder in New England Ski Museum collection 1989L.002.001. Austin Macaulay, “Story of Cannon Mt. Race Course,” Program, North American Alpine Championships, 1967, 7.

<sup>8</sup> “New Hampshire Pledges Support to Off-Year Olympic Ski Race at Cannon Mountain,” New Hampshire Division of Parks News Release, December 8, 1966, New England Ski Museum collection 1989L.002.001. Hank Crawford, “Numerous Private Sources Contribute Equipment for Big Cannon Mountain Race,” New Hampshire Division of Parks News Release No. 7, February 17, 1967, New England Ski Museum collection 1989L.002.001. “House Joint Resolution No 23 to provide for the 1967 North American Alpine Championships at Cannon Mountain in New Hampshire,” New England Ski Museum collection 1989L.002.001.

<sup>9</sup> “Progress Report of Cooperative Efforts on Arrangements for the North American Alpine Championships,” January 25, 1967, New England Ski Museum collection 1989L.002.001.

<sup>10</sup> “Our History,” Lutsen Mountains, <https://www.lutsen.com/about/history/>, accessed 1-23-2017.

<sup>11</sup> Dorothy I. Crossley, *Take MY Picture: Memoirs & Photographs of Skiing and Sailing*. (Etna, NH: The Durand Press, 2005), 84.

<sup>12</sup> Crossley, *Take MY Picture*, 86. Program, North American Alpine Championships, 1967, 13. “US Ski Team Housing List,” “Press Housing List, March 7, 1967”, typescripts, New England Ski Museum collection 1989L.002.001.

<sup>13</sup> Transcript, “North American-International Alpine Championship Race Meeting, October 22, 1966,” 13, 15, New England ski Museum Collection 2008.119.324.

<sup>14</sup> “French Dominate Year’s Biggest Meet,” *Ski Week*, 1, 13, March 22, 1967, 4. Calendar, “1967 U.S.A. International Race Series,” New England Ski Museum 2008.119.324.

<sup>15</sup> McPhaul, *A History of Cannon Mountain*, 115.

<sup>16</sup> “Minutes of the Fourth Jury and Team Leaders Meeting, March 10, 1967,” New England Ski Museum 2008.119.326, Press Kit.

<sup>17</sup> Dan Jenkins, “That Glamorous Devil and His Chorus Line,” *Sports Illustrated*, 26, 12, March 20, 1967, 23.

<sup>18</sup> “French Dominate Year’s Biggest Meet,” *Ski Week*, 1, 13, March 22, 1967, 5.

<sup>19</sup> “French Dominate Year’s Biggest Meet,” *Ski Week*, 1, 13, March 22, 1967, 5.

<sup>20</sup> Event Invitations, New England Ski Museum collection 1989L.002.001

<sup>21</sup> Crossley, *Take MY Picture*, 91.

<sup>22</sup> Fran Sayward, “Franconia Ski Event Lesson for Would-Be Olympic Hosts,” *Sunday Telegram*, March 19, 1967, New England Ski Museum collection 1989L.002.001

<sup>23</sup> Calendar, “1967 U.S.A. International Race Series,” New England Ski Museum 2008.119.324. Fry, *The Story of Modern Skiing*, 136.

<sup>24</sup> Fry, *The Story of Modern Skiing*, 137.

<sup>25</sup> Jenkins, *Sports Illustrated*, 24.



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## Germany's Ski Troops: A History

By E. John B. Allen

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Author's Collection

*A bit of fantasy to raise awareness of another facet of the German Imperial Army: on maneuvers in 1891. The use of two poles was exceptional in those days.*

Skis had a military value long before modern borders were drawn. In winter, however, troops went into 'winter quarters' and waited for the spring offensives as dukes, counts, marquises fought over feudal jurisdictions. Only when kings commanded their country's armies, only when they had enough power to collect taxes do such specialized units as ski troops come to be deployed. Obviously, there had to be a political motivation and snow. This occurred first in Norway in the 18th century although the country was not, in fact, a political state until 1905. Emahusen's regulations of 1735, Hals' waxing pamphlet of 1761, and Grüner's well documented and well-illustrated ski manual of 1765 showing uniforms, regulations, drills on skis, and payments<sup>1</sup> are all marks of modernization.

The real impetus for putting troops on skis came, not from Norway whose ski troop units were disbanded in 1826,<sup>2</sup> but during the late 19<sup>th</sup> century with the second great advances of industrialization that swept the western world and had effects

even in far eastern Russia and Japan. Technical wizardry, unbridled capitalism, growing populations, unequal class systems, all made the mix of social Darwinism, nationalism and imperialism a dangerous brew. By 1905 there were organized ski troops in Norway, Sweden, Finland, Russia, Japan, the Austro-Hungarian Empire, Germany, Switzerland, Italy, and France. Ministers of Defense doled out prizes (France), kings attended ski jumping meets (Norway), and explorers used skis in their quests for Antarctic grail (Sweden). Endless disputes over technique raged (Austria), and even the British contemplated equipping some of their colonials with skis to keep the other native tribes in control (India). Frequently military officers were the prime movers in the development both of soldiering on skis and for civilian enjoyment in the snows: *Tenente Zavattari* (Italy), *Capitaine Clerc* (France), *Leutnant Paulcke* (Germany), and *Kapten Heijkenskiöld* (Sweden) come easily to mind.





Author's Collection

*French illustrator Louis Bombled (1862-1927), popular for his military pictures, caught the spirit of German ski troop training in his 1892 drawing of a Goslar unit led by the sword bearing officer. It shows just that mix of medieval and modern that characterized military thinking and operations prior to and into World War I.*

With some differences this development occurs in the United States too. The 10<sup>th</sup> Mountain Division had fifty years of history behind it even though the civilian founders appear hardly to have known of it, so enamored were they of the outstanding defense on skis that the Finns mounted against the mechanized might of the Soviet Union's invasion of their land in 1939. But careful consideration had been given to a ski force based in Yellowstone National Park as early as 1887,<sup>3</sup> and Frederic Remington drew a number of ski troop activities.<sup>4</sup> Alaska had barracks full of ski troops in 1912.<sup>5</sup> Norwich University's cadets were on skis in World War I,<sup>6</sup> and immigrant Finns paraded at Minneapolis' Winter Carnival in 1940.<sup>7</sup>

There is far too much material to cover the history of modern ski troops world-wide. I have chosen to analyze the development of German military skiing as the United States 10<sup>th</sup> Mountain Division faced the German *Gebirgsjäger* in Italy from January 1945 until the end of the European war, even though neither side actually used skis in combat on that front.

Like the United States, the Germans, too, had a fifty year history of ski troop development by the beginning of World War II but not only did they know its history but during the Nazi period (from 1933 on) built on traditions that had their foundation in the 1890s. Germany's military with its Junker officer caste held a special place in German culture, "a characteristic foible,"

commented one perceptive observer.<sup>8</sup> In the run-up to what would have been the 1916 Winter Olympic Games (to be held on the Feldberg in the *Schwarzwald*, the Black Forest), Reichstag deputy Dr. Müller maintained that the Olympics would give "a tremendous educational impulse so that more and more young people participate in sports," and ominously, "thus being ready for other endeavors as well,"<sup>9</sup> the Games being "in the best interest of the army itself."<sup>10</sup> This should hardly come as a surprise; after all, in 1905, at the very formation of the civilian *Deutsche Ski Verband* (DSV), the German Ski Association, one section of the constitution specifically called for "the training of ski runners for the army."<sup>11</sup> Right from the start, then, a civilian-military mix was entrenched in German skiing: sporting, economic, social and cultural.

Following Leutnant Langenreich's experiments, the 82<sup>nd</sup> Infantry at Goslar was equipped with skis in the winter of 1891-92. By order of the Royal Prussian War Ministry, skis were ordered from Max Schneider in Berlin.<sup>12</sup> Max Schneider (no relation to Hannes Schneider) played a pivotal role at the beginning of German, even European, skiing both military and civilian. "On my suggestion," he wrote to Carl Luther, influential editor of the DSV's *Der Winter* in 1908, "the armies of Germany, Austria and France tried out skis."<sup>13</sup> As early as 1895, Schneider listed a page of aristocratic and military names who had bought his skis.<sup>14</sup> The use of skis by military units and by "the proper sort"

created a rush to equip others. By 1895, garrisons in Ortelsburg, Culm and Hirschberg (all now in Poland), and two at Colmar and Schlettstadt (both now in France) were equipped with skis.<sup>15</sup> And there were more to come in northern Germany, mid-Germany and on the Feldberg. In 1912, the Prussian War Ministry put in an order for 10,000 pairs of skis some of which, no doubt were directed to the mountain artillery regiments.<sup>16</sup>

This is an astonishing increase but then the Austrians and the French were doing the same thing; Max Schneider had listed the Austrian *Kaiserliche und Königliche* (Imperial and Royal) regiments and agencies that had obtained skis from him, and from 1905 on the French had organized their own military ski factory at the headquarters of the *Chasseurs Alpins*, the famed *Quinze-Neuf*, the 159<sup>th</sup> Infantry, at Briançon in the Haute Savoie.<sup>17</sup>

The problem was, unlike Scandinavia, all over middle Europe so few knew how to ski that in all such armies there had to be instruction, and Scandinavians were seconded to these German, Austrian, Italian and French units. Various German officers were also sent to Scandinavia, and Hauptmann Czant observed the Russo-Japanese war in which medics on skis were featured in the popular French middle class

weekly *Le Petit Parisien*. Czant realized, as others had done, that should war come to Europe (and Germany's defeat of Austria in 1866, of France in 1871 besides the militaristic goings-on in the Balkans and even in the Norwegian-Swedish confrontation of 1905 made it seem ever more likely) "the passes of our mountains will play an even greater role."<sup>18</sup> Like many others, he also wondered what Napoleon would have been able to do had his troops been equipped with skis. Curiously, no western historian seems to have recorded how the Emperor's retreating forces had been harassed by Russians on skis during the retreat of 1812.<sup>19</sup> The German army, ever since its stunningly swift defeats of Austria in 1866 and more so of France in 1871, was the most feared in Europe. The Germans themselves, however, were not so sanguine about their own ski troops. The Kaiser visiting Switzerland in 1912, inquired, "Can your people ski?" and received the uncomfoting reply, "On command, your Majesty, every one!"<sup>20</sup> Two years later, the German High Command put a stop on any unit participating in the competitions at Pontresina since they had no chance of victory, even no chance of doing well.<sup>21</sup>

The ski troops garrisoned in Germany received wide publicity as yet another arm of the already militarized society. Pictures



*This NCO is making his rounds of the camp in 1892, notebook in hand, no poles and on carefully made skis. This figure of the military skier in the French weekly L'Illustration was the sort of image that inspired the development of a counter-force in France, later to become the famed Régiment de la Neige of the Chasseurs alpins.*



*Friedrichroda in Thuringia was one of the many small towns that had taken to winter sports in the early 1900s. It received a major boost when the military trained here, the postcard showing clearly that this military training was simply part of the civilian winter sports available.*

appeared in the middle class weeklies not only in Germany itself but also in England and France just at the time when high society was taking to winter sporting. In fact, it was not at all clear just what role troops on skis might play. Prowess on skis was measured in length of marches accomplished, in height of meters gained along with results of military patrol races. These last were not always popular since not winning was considered a military defeat and no country's team could beat the Norwegians.

There was also the problem of recruitment. It was automatically assumed that recruits would come from the snowy mountain regions but, as the French also discovered, peasant mountain lads were not necessarily as enthusiastic about winter on skis as their townsmen mentors. Still, in the 1880s a number of schools instituted some sort of ski learning as part of the winter gymnastics curriculum in Braunlage, Oberwiesenthal in the *Erzgebirge*, and Altenau in *Oberharz*. The Prussian Ministry of Cultures' Ski Course in 1912 attracted teachers from Goslar, Halberstadt, Seesen, Hanover, and Göttingen.<sup>22</sup> Another course was held in the *Riesengebirge*.<sup>23</sup>

The health of the nation was a much discussed topic in all European countries with an eye to the effect on military preparedness. The well-known Hans Suren, widely published physical culturist and believer in nudism, came to the Winterberg Ski Club's teacher course in 1912, the one designed "in the interest of fostering manly youth." He spoke on the positive hygienic side of winter sports.<sup>24</sup> The youth movement, the natural

healing movement, naturism and racial hygiene were all part of a "natural" culture designed to cure the ills of an industrial and over-burdened society.<sup>25</sup> The Kaiser and his military chiefs wanted a healthy society that would breed healthy children. In 1893, the Crown Prince along with Princes Eitel Friedrich and Adalbert of Prussia received skis for Christmas, and the six-year old *Erbprinz* Johann Leopold von Sachsen-Coburg und Gotha was featured on a postcard. All very elite...but the German army needed healthy recruits already proficient on skis. A major problem loomed; the population of the country had increased from 41 million to 56 million between 1871 and 1900, but only stood at 64 million by 1910.<sup>26</sup> In the Social Darwinian climate, these were worrying statistics, not as foreboding as the French decline, but with the Gallic cry of '*Revanche*' echoing in the corridors of the Prussian War Ministry, Major Maurer, promoter of military skiing for youth in the Feldberg region, had the local children singing:

*Wer will unter die Soldaten  
(Whoever wants to become a soldier)  
Der muss haben einen Ski.  
(Must have a ski (instead of Gewehr—a gun)).<sup>27</sup>*

Once the Balkan war had become a full-blown European entanglement, the mix of sport and nationalism combined with the training by long marches seemed ineffective. Everyone looked to Norway for guidance, yet Norwegian military skiing was not

*Continued on page 21*



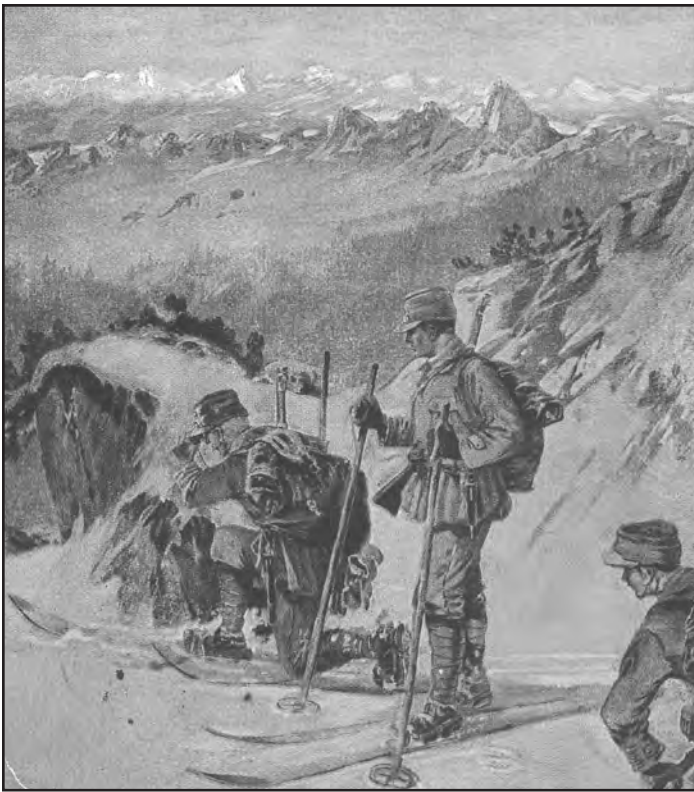
*Author's Collection*

*By 1913, some German troops had received special ski uniforms, similar skis, bindings, boots and rucksacks. These two are portrayed as if on a holiday excursion—precisely that mix of civilian-military outlook so common.*



*Author's Collection*

*Once the war started, and as the winter set in in 1914, the first ski 'battle' in December 1914 took place in the Vosges. The postcards depicted here show German and Austrian ski troops readying for battle in the Carpathians.*



German and Austrian ski troops high on the Dolomite front.

Continued from page 19

a good model to follow simply because no Norwegian cadet needed to be trained how to ski. Also important was the fact that in Norway, the ski provided a relationship between officers and men of equality—quite the opposite of the caste-bound *Junker* and his *Soldaten*. The German High Command started to look elsewhere and settled on the Italian Alpini as a model.<sup>28</sup> For the Germans, the Vosges front was of foremost importance since it was the focus of France's *revanche* mentality and propaganda. High priority, therefore, was given to Leutnant Wilhelm Paulcke's volunteer ski detachment.<sup>29</sup> Indeed, one of the very few 'battles' on skis took place near St. Dié on 31 December 1914 with no obvious advantage to either side.<sup>30</sup> At Hermannsweilerkopf four months later, *Die blauen Teufel*, forty Blue Devils as the Germans nick-named the *Chasseurs Alpains*, "dashed down the hill with the speed of an express train" and were all shot by the entrenched Germans at the foot of the slope.<sup>31</sup> It was the skiers' version of the *élan vitale* which was already producing such a drumbeat of deathly statistics on the Western Front.

Yet the social side of the German ski troops remained an important influence. In 1915, "a contest between skiers" referred to a firefight, in 1916 a drawing of "the ski artist" improving his marksmanship enlivened a report.<sup>32</sup> One German ski outfit became the *Liebling der Division*, the Darling of the Division, another the "Sports Club." The call up notice for Black Forest recruits challenged skiers "to show them [the French] what we've learned." When Eugen Kalkschmidt joined his unit, his "only worry was that the war would end before the ski troops could

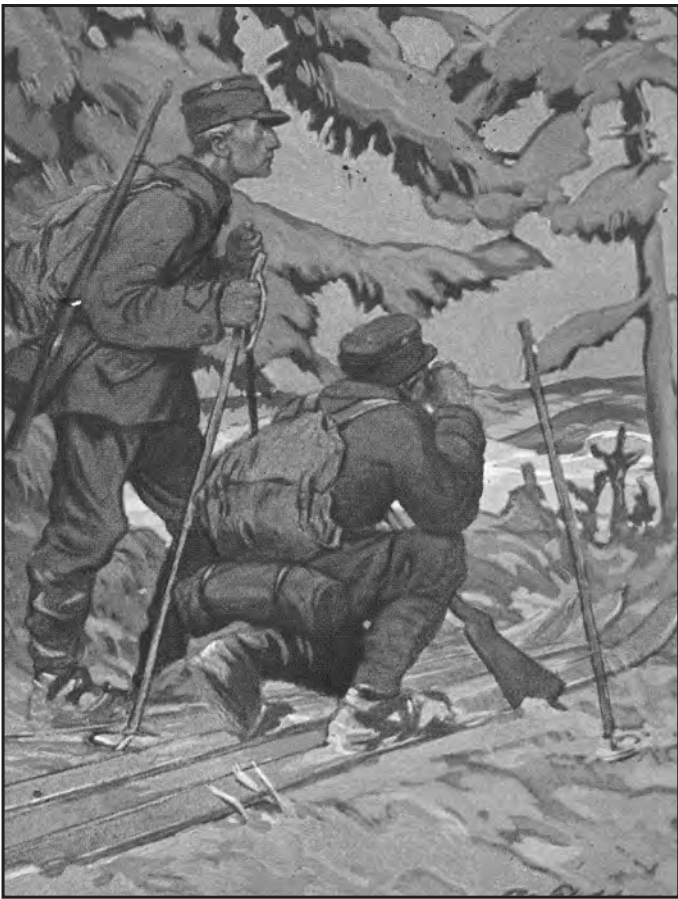
get into the powder snow." Those skiing soldiers sang:

*Wir sind die Schneeschuhkompagnie*  
 (Of the great ski troops we're all a part,)  
*Der Anzug Weiss und glatt die Ski.*  
 (With whiten shirt and speedy ski.)  
*Wir laufen gen Feind mit Eil*  
 (We rush 'gainst foe with gladden heart)  
*Und unsere Losung heisst: Skiheil!*  
 (And sing Skiheil with friends we see!<sup>33</sup>)

Drawings, paintings, and postcards romanticized the ski troops, but the fact remains that they did not prove particularly effective on any of the major fronts, the Vosges, Dolomites, or Carpathians. When the war ended in November 1918, the allies determined to emasculate the German military, the German Empire, along with the economic infrastructure. The Versailles *Diktat*, as Germans generally greeted the Treaty, provided emotional fodder for militaristic radical Right and Left. Parliamentary government—long suspect in Germany's militarized society—was no match for arguments settled by hooliganism with a gun in its hand. In the post-war political chaos, growing ever more violent, the formation of units called *Freikorps* with members taking personal oaths to the leader, was an anathema to the *Reichswehr* leadership of Germany's treaty-permitted 100,000 man and 4,000 officer army. It was easy, therefore, in the spring of 1919 to disband most of the ski troops<sup>34</sup> with the DSV requesting skis from the demobilized to be distributed to local schools.<sup>35</sup> Photos of kids going to school on skis proliferated, school ski programs increased, clubs divided their statistics into 'men', 'women', and now 'children'. Just before the Nazis came to power, a large club, the *Ski Club Schwarzwald* could boast 2,488 youth members from a total of 10,334; a small club like the *Schiverband Eifel* listed 200 young people out of the 1,085 membership.<sup>36</sup>

Children—as before the First World War—were again viewed as the hope for a revived Germany. Addressing German skiers, men and women, at the end of the *Deutschen Kampfspiele* (German Championships) in 1922, Dr. Holl, President of the DSV, reminded his audience in hortatory tones that German-Austrians were "alike in blood" while he echoed the now deposed Kaiser, reminding skiers that "there are no parties, only Germans."<sup>37</sup> He finished in emotional rhetoric striking a strong chord: "German Youth! You are our future, in you we believe; in you we set our hopes for us to regain a free and superlative skiing on free magnificent mountains in a free Fatherland!"

That was 1922. Five years later, dry-land courses for ski troops preceded the January-February 1928 ski troop maneuvers in the Harz. Besides local 'commandos,' units came from Halle, Leipzig, Quedlinberg as well as the long established Goslar *Jäger* troop.<sup>38</sup> It is not difficult, then, to understand that Nazi propaganda easily invaded the virgin snows of a winter Germany; the swastika flew at the FIS (*Fédération Internationale de Ski*) conference held in Oberhof, Thuringia in 1931.<sup>39</sup> Hitler took power as Chancellor of Germany on 30 January 1933. That



All the soldiers in this generic ski patrol are healthy, vigorously watchful, fierce and determined—those attributes to bolster morale at home.

winter photographs of Nazi elites inspecting ski facilities, congratulating patrols appeared in the sporting papers.<sup>40</sup> *Der Winter*, the organ of the DSV since 1907, changed its masthead from something essentially civilian to one of Aryan arrogance<sup>41</sup> and the German Ski Association itself was dissolved in 1937. Regional associations gave up their individual names to be subsumed under numbered *Gau*.<sup>42</sup> Everything having to do with skiing came under the newly created *Fachamt Skilauf*, itself a section of the *Deutscher Reichsverband für Leibesübungen*.<sup>43</sup> The military success of the *Anschluss* with Austria in March 1938 brought a flood of Germanizing: “Gross-Deutschland, the World’s Strongest Ski Nation.” The euphoria continued when “Sudeten German Ski Lands Come Home to the Reich,” after the acquisition of Sudeten Czechoslovakia six months later.<sup>44</sup>

All this was an exceedingly positive development for Hitler’s Nazi Germany, yet the Führer himself would have forbidden skiing because it led only to accidents although he realized that “the mountain troops draw their recruits from such fools.”<sup>45</sup> Not only that, but skiing remained so social, elitist in the 1930s that it went against the *Gemeinschaft* that Nazi society was supposed to be embracing. Where you could find that community was in the *Hitler Jugend*, the Hitler Youth, the Nazi hope for the future.

The NSDAP (*Nationalsozialistische Deutsche Arbeiterpartei*: National Socialist German Workers Party) founded the *Hitler Jugend* in 1926. Based on earlier youth organizations, the Nazis then incorporated similar religious and civic groups to produce a membership of c. 2 million by 1936 and over 5 million by the start of the world war in September 1939. The Hitler Youth, with its own *Führer* (Baldur von Schirach), its own monthly magazine, *Wille und Macht* (Strength and Power), was designed to produce future members and leaders for the *Schutz-Staffel*, the S.S.<sup>46</sup> Sport was part of the “health” curriculum and in winter, the organization’s first ski meeting took place on 26-27 January 1934. Seven hundred were at Bad Reichenhall the following winter when both the Hitler Youth’s *Führer* and the *Reichssport Führer*, Hans von Tschammer und Osten were on hand. Fifteen hundred competed in the skiing and skating events in 1939; the high point was the inauguration of the *Führerwettkampf*—a special race honoring Hitler himself.<sup>47</sup>

Much enthusiasm was generated at the *Hitler Jugend* ski school in Nesselwang with its Adolf Hitler Ski Village. Ski instruction, ski races, ski orienteering were offered in the outdoor curriculum. One hundred thousand signed up to ski, enjoy community living, listen to Nazi propaganda, and join in the song fests: here was the *Gemeinschaft* the Nazis desired as “the ski school stands as the bodily and world-view upbringing of the new German youth, the youth of the *Führer* and our Chancellor, Adolf Hitler.” And gas masks were available<sup>48</sup> so...it wasn’t going to be just fun and games after all; the skiing *Gemeinschaft* was going to war.

During the 1939-45 war, some 17 *Gebirgsjäger* divisions were raised that saw action in Austria, the Balkans, Crete, Czechoslovakia, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Hungary, Italy, Yugoslavia, Greece, Norway, Poland, and Russia.<sup>49</sup> Besides training areas in Austria and Germany, only in Finland, Norway and Russia were skis used to any extent for military action against an enemy. These divisions started the war under the training codes from 1917 until the German army invaded Norway in April 1940. Having also watched how the Finns managed against the Soviets, quite quickly under the leadership of General Eduard Dietl, small numbers of troops on skis were used for occasional offensive moves to obtain strategic outposts, sometimes small machine gun units might accompany them, most often men on skis were used for patrol work. Medics and signals outfits were also equipped with skis as well as other specialized staff such as forward artillery observers. It had been obvious in the country around Narvik, in northern Norway, just how vital skis had been in 1940, and the Germans were keenly aware of the importance of skis by Norwegian resistance fighters.<sup>50</sup>

But none of this really played any role as the United States’ 10<sup>th</sup> Mountain Division fought the German 5<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> *Gebirgsjäger* divisions in the Italian Apennines and further north, as the war came to an end in 1945. There, mountain climbing experience, not ski experience, was one major factor, yet it was the ski experience among the German ski troops that held them together, just as it was amongst the Americans.



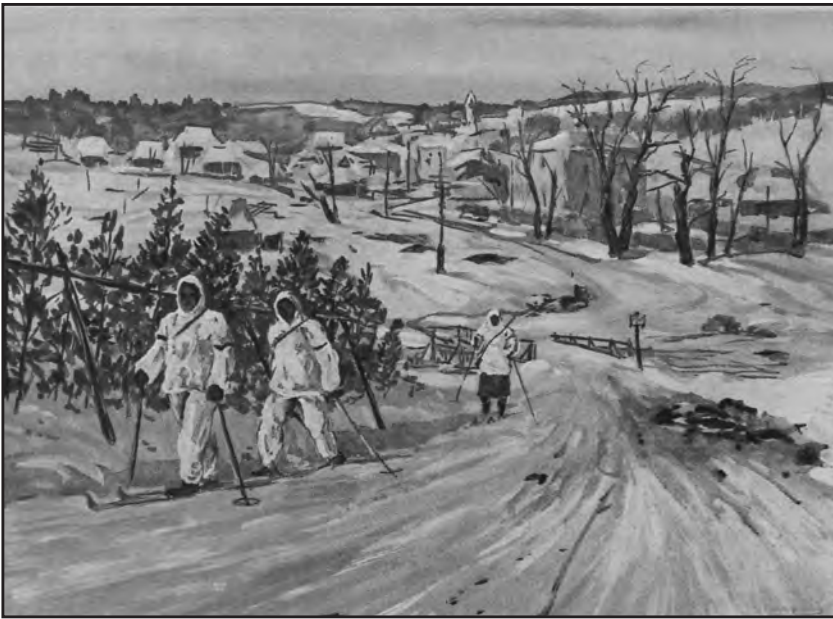
In skiing outfits not much different from those of 1913, these two young troopers are getting ready for an outing in 1928. It is always surprising how many of the artists fail to give their subjects any gloves!



The Italian weekly *Domenica del Corriere's* artists blatantly exploited emotions in their covers and here showed their camouflaged German allies annihilating a Soviet force in the Orel region, some 200 miles southwest of Moscow in March 1943. That area would be liberated six months later by the Soviets.

## Endnotes

- Jens Henrik Emahusen, "Exercises von einer Compagnie Schii-Leuffers auf denen Schiihen," *Der Winter* 29 (January 1936): 90-93; Hals in Jakob Vaage, *Skienes Verden*. Oslo: Hemmenes, 1979, 254; Tor Hjelm, "En hærordning-forendring offentlig premiering av skiløpning og opprinnelsen til den modern skisport for 200 år siden," *Hærmuseet Akershus Årbok* (1965): 1-17.
- E. John B. Allen, *The Culture and Sport of Skiing from Antiquity until World War II*. Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 2007, 32-33.
- Report of the Superintendent of Yellowstone National Park, 20 August 1887 cited in Jack Ellis Haynes, "The First Winter Trip Through Yellowstone National Park," *Annals of Wyoming* 14 (April 1942): 91. See also E. John B. Allen, *From Skisport to Skiing: One Hundred Years of an American Sport 1840-1940*. Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1993, 39-40.
- For example in *Harper's Weekly* 29 January 1898.
- University of Alaska Fairbanks, Seifert Album 85-122-68N photograph of E Company 16<sup>th</sup> Infantry at Fort Davis showing c. 60 men on skis in 1912.
- Photo in *New York Times* Part IV (18 February 1917).
- Photographic postcard, Allen archives, Rumney, New Hampshire, USA.
- Marie von Bunsen, *The World I Used to Know 1860-1912*. Edited and translated by Oakley Williams. London: Thornton Butterworth, 1930, 71.
- Deutscher Reichstag, Stenographischer Bericht, Vol. 292, 7339, cited in Arnd Krüger, "Buying Victories," in J. A. Mangan (Ed.), *Tribal Identities. Nationalism, Europe, Sport*. London: Routledge, 1995, 195.
- Leaflet produced in the Carl-Diem-Institut, *Die VI Olympischen Spiele Berlin 1916*. Cologne: Barz & Bienburg, 1978, cited in *Ibid.*, 91-92.
- Satzung des Deutschen Ski Verbandes 4. November 1905, reprinted in Gerd Falkner (Ed.), *100 Jahre Deutscher*



*If these German troops were not camouflaged and without rifles, this scene could be a typical day's outing from a homely village. In fact, it is a German patrol in 1943 deep in the Soviet Union.*

*The call "Skier für die Ostfront" (Skis for the Eastern Front) went out in December 1941. Important sport personalities like the Reichsportführer von Tschammer und Osten and 1936 Olympic gold medalist Christl Cranz were on hand to receive the donated skis. Here, skis from the Goslar region pile up.*



*Kurt Kranz's many drawings of German ski troop activity on the Lapland front were published in a 1944 propaganda book to show the folk back home how Germany's ski troops made it over a stream and reached the knoll safely...and pulled in a Soviet prisoner.*



## Endnotes (continued from page 23)

Skiverband. Planegg: DSV 2005, III, 151.

<sup>12</sup> *Der Tourist* cited in *Deutsche Turn-Zeitung* 49 (7 Dezember 1893).

<sup>13</sup> Letter Max Schneider to CIL [Carl Luther], Berlin, 22 November 1908. HMS in Luther Archiv. This archive was housed in the DSV's archives but is now being re-archived at the Institut für Sportgeschichte, Deutsche Sporthochschule, Köln and will be available for research in 2017. Hereafter Luther Archiv.

<sup>14</sup> Max Schneider, *Praktische Winke für Wintersportler*. Berlin: Wintersportverlag, n.d. [1895].

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*, 22.

<sup>16</sup> See Schneider, "Die Einführung des Schneeschuhlaufs in Deutschland," *Der Winter* XVII (August 1924): 244. For orders of skis see photo of document dated 8.3.1893 in *Ibid.*, 2 (October 1935): 18 and VII (19 December 1912): 232.

<sup>17</sup> Schneider, *Praktische Winke*, 22, and *La Montaigne* IV, 12 (20 December 1908): 243-244.

<sup>18</sup> Hermann Czant, *Militär-Gebirgsdienst im Winter*. Wien: C. W. Stern, 1907, 10-11.

<sup>19</sup> Letter Napoléon to [Hugues Berned] Marr, duc de Bassano, Ministre des Relations Extérieures, Doutorna, 18 novembre 1812, in Napoléon Bonaparte, *Correspondance Générale*, publié par la Fondation Napoléon, XII: La campagne de Russie 1812. [Paris]: Fayard, 2012, 1260.

<sup>20</sup> Quoted in H. Koenig, "Anfänge des Militärschifahrens in der Schweiz," *Allgemeine Schweizerische\_Militärzeitung* 1-2 (1944): 14.

<sup>21</sup> *Münchener Zeitung* (8 June 1914), cited in E. Hepp, "Militärischer Skilauf und Heeresmeisterschaften," 2. TMS in Luther Archiv.

<sup>22</sup> *Der Harz* 19 (February 1912): 2

<sup>23</sup> *Year Book of the Ski Club of Great Britain* (1912): 98.

<sup>24</sup> *Chronik 1906-07 Skiclub Winterberg*, 61.

<sup>25</sup> For an overview, see Arnd Krüger, "There Goes This Manliness," *Journal of Sport History* 18 (Spring 1991): 137-158. See also Giselher Spitzer, *Der deutsche naturismus. Idee und Entwicklung einer Volkerzieherischen Bewegung*. 60-76, 81-83, 161.

<sup>26</sup> John E. Knodel, *The Decline of Fertility in Germany 1871-1939*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1974, 32.

<sup>27</sup> Unsigned [Carl Luther], "Militär Skilauf und herren Skimeisterschaften," *Soldat der Berge, Truppschrift* (1 February 1942): 4.

<sup>28</sup> *Allgemeine Sport-Zeitung* (25 December 1910): 1700.

<sup>29</sup> Wilhelm Paulcke, "Freiwillige Ski-Corps," *Der Winter* VI, 5 (2 December 1911): 86-88.

<sup>30</sup> Allen, *Culture and Sport of Skiing*, 158.

<sup>31</sup> *The Graphic* (3 April 1915): 432-433.

<sup>32</sup> *Scientific American Supplement*, 17.

<sup>33</sup> Luther, *Schneeschuhläufer im Krieg*, 149.

<sup>34</sup> Certainly not all; Captain Schindler of the 19<sup>th</sup> Lindau Jäger company had Norwegian Jens Jaeger instruct his men in cross-country techniques in January 1922. Jens Jaeger, "Skisporten i Tyskland Vinteren 1922," *Aarbok* (1922): 126.



Author's Collection

Kurt Kranz's other drawings included receiving mail, darning socks, being de-briefed, waiting with machine gun ready and so on, all to give those at home a reliance on what the ski troops were able to do and stand up to on a daily basis in the primitive forests of Lapland—the title of the book.

<sup>35</sup> *Deutsche Turn-Zeitung* (1919): 69.

<sup>36</sup> *Der Winter* 26, 1 (October 1932): 247.

<sup>37</sup> Dr. Holl speech in Walter Bensemann und Fritz Frommel, *Deutsche Kampfspiele Berlin 1922*. Stuttgart: Frommel-Verlag, 1922, 14.

<sup>38</sup> "Wintermanöver im Harz," *Der Harzfreund* 312 (20 December 1927): n.p.

<sup>39</sup> Photo in *Revue du Ski* 2 (March 1931): 94.

<sup>40</sup> *Harzer Rundschau* 12 (1933): 11.

<sup>41</sup> See the numbers of *Der Winter* (Oct. and Nov. 1934).

<sup>42</sup> *Ibid.*, (December 1935): 340.

<sup>43</sup> *Frankfurt Fachamt Skilauf Gau XII-XIII* (1938): 8.

<sup>44</sup> *Ski-Sport* (22 March 1938): 4; Gunter Krusche, "Sudetendeutsches Skiland kommt heim ins Reich!" *Der Winter* 32 (November 1938): 33-36.

<sup>45</sup> Albert Speer, *Inside the Third Reich: Memoirs*. Translated by Richard and Clara Winston. New York: Avon, 1970, 83.

<sup>46</sup> There are no hard statistics for the Hitler Jugend. Those given here are possibly on the short side.

<sup>47</sup> *Der Winter* 28 (December 1934): 337; 7 (January 1939): 353; *Ski-Sport* (16 February 1937): 5.

<sup>48</sup> *Neuzeitlicher Skilauf: Amtlicher Lehrplan*. Berlin: Limpert, 1937. *Der Winter* 29 (January 1936): 416-417; 32 (January 1939): 354.

<sup>49</sup> Barry Gregory, *Mountain and Arctic Warfare from Alexander to Afghanistan*. Wellingborough: Patrick Stephens, 1989, 119.

<sup>50</sup> Knut Haukelid, *Skis Against the Atom*. Minot, North Dakota: North American Heritage Press, 1989. [First published 1954, revised ed. 1973].



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## AN UNLIKELY ENCOUNTER

**Robert W. Parker**, Excerpted with permission from *What'd You Do In the War, Dad?*

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*After the war, 87th Mountain Infantry regiment veteran Bob Parker had a long career in the ski business. He is best known as editor of Skiing magazine, and long-serving marketing executive and vice president at Vail and Beaver Creek. Parker's 2005 book **What'd You Do In The War, Dad?** features many vignettes of life in the 10th Mountain Division told from the soldier's point of view that escape historical studies of wider scope.*

In late May or early June, 1945, Lieutenants Russ McJury and Len Landry, along with Sergeant Sigi Engl, were setting out by jeep from the 87th headquarters at Caporetto on a quixotic pilgrimage to Austria and Bavaria. They were going to search for American and Austrian friends and family thought to be stationed, or living, in those former enemy enclaves. To give matters an official appearance, the two officers dragooned me to serve as putative “driver” for the expedition.

Our first stop was to be Innsbruck, Austria, where Sigi remembered his uncle had lived before the war. As we GI Argonauts wound down the last slopes of the Brenner Pass, we could see the little-damaged Baroque towers of old Innsbruck, but also noted an area east of the city where Allied bombs had flattened everything.

Once in the city, Sigi guided us among the shattered ruins of Innsbruck's main rail station and rail yards. Engl, stunned by the wreckage, soon admitted that the apartments where his uncle and his family had lived had literally been wiped off the map.

Saddened and chastened by this setback, we found our way to American military government headquarters, to seek information about Sigi's uncle. As we stopped in a parking lot composed of bulldozed concrete, stone and brick, a small European convertible pulled up beside us, and a lanky American officer unfolded himself from the driver's seat. Approaching the officer to ask for directions, I suddenly stopped short and exclaimed, “Joe, for God's sake!”

Mysteriously, the officer vigorously shook his head, lay his finger across his lips, and said quietly, “At the moment at least, I'm not Joe!” Then he handed me a calling card, and said, again quietly, “Here's where you'll find me. Give me a half-hour or so. And remember, I'm now Lieutenant Wolfe.” Then he walked quickly into the headquarters building.

### ***That Guy's Joe Frankenstein!***

The three others gathered around me to demand what was going on. Infected by Lieutenant Wolfe's secrecy, I whispered, “That guy's Joe Frankenstein, formerly 87th Recon. Now who knows what he's up to!” McJury as CO of the little group, suggested we try to find Sigi's uncle before probing further into the Joe Frankenstein mystery. An hour later, we had established through the Displaced Persons office that the uncle was not on the current displaced persons rolls, and that we had best look for him at the family's main home in Kitzbühl. The four of us found “Lt. Wolfe's” closet-sized office, and gathered inside. Warmly greeting me and Landry, whom he

also knew, Wolfe then sat at his GI metal desk and in a voice barely above a whisper, briefly brought us up to date.

“I left you guys at Camp Hale to join the OSS (Office of Strategic Services). Of course I couldn't tell anybody—the outfit's supposedly secret, even within the military! They gave me all kinds of hush-hush training, and dropped me by parachute into the Austrian Alps. Now here I am, under an assumed name to protect my identity, responsible for culling the Nazis out of the hundreds of Austrian and German “volunteers” who want to work for the military government!”

We pressed Frankenstein/Wolfe for details, but he raised his hand for silence. “The walls have ears, as they say. Even my associates think I'm Lieutenant Wolfe. Why don't we have dinner this evening, and I'll tell you the whole story.” Writing the name of a restaurant, which Engl knew well, on his calling card, the lieutenant ushered us out with “See you at seven?”

Sigi found us a small Austrian hotel, whose proprietor he had known as a teenager, where we could stay the night for a few cartons of American cigarettes. After cleaning up, we joined the hotelier for a schnapps in his stube. When our host left, the others demanded that Landry and I fill them in on the mysterious Frankenstein, before we sat down to dinner with him.

“He's an amazing guy,” I began. “His real names is Josef von Frankenstein—he's a baron or count, or something. The name of the family castle, Frankenstein, or Frenchman's Rock, was borrowed by Mary Shelley as the name of the character who created the famous monster.”

### ***Austrian Ambassador***

“Joe's father,” Landry continued, “was Austrian ambassador to the Court of St. James. Joe was raised and went to school in England. When Hitler took over Austria, Joe's father, a confirmed anti-Nazi, lost his job. After a brief stint as an ambulance driver in France until its fall, Joe made his way to the U.S. A skier since boyhood vacations in the Alps, he naturally joined the ski troops when we declared war on Germany.”

McJury stood up, looking at his watch. “Time to meet this fascinating guy for dinner. Sigi, show us the way, and quickly, if you're as hungry as I am!”

Engl led the group the few blocks to the restaurant, located close to the famous Goldenes Dachl, the gold-roofed balcony at the end of Innsbruck's Maria Theresa Boulevard. Frankenstein was already there, and had a table tucked away from the other diners. It was clear that Joe, or Lieutenant Wolfe, still wanted privacy in which to tell his story. Dinner was simple; some kind of veal, dumplings and a plain dessert, washed down with Tyrolian wine. When the table was cleared, the waiter brought real American coffee, a small miracle in those days, and Joe began his story.

“As I mentioned earlier,” he began, “one day I was at Camp Hale, the next on my way to Washington. Kay (his wife, the novelist Kay Boyle) had to pack up our tiny apartment in Redcliff and follow

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two weeks later. By that time, I was deep into my training, the details of which are still secret, except that they obviously included jump training. After several weeks, I met another ex-Austrian, a skier and mountaineer, who was to be dropped with me into the Austrian Alps. Our mission, in retrospect, seemed foolhardy, to put it kindly. We first had to find a safe headquarters on a mountain farm, then establish regular radio contact, first with England, later with U.S. operations in France.”

Joe paused, laughing quietly. “That was the easy part. In late autumn of 1944, my partner and I flew as part of a bombing mission over Bavaria. Somewhere near Munich, our plane diverted long enough to drop us in the Voralps west of Innsbruck, terrain already covered with early snow, then doubled back to rejoin the returning bombers.”

### ***We Had Skis***

Anticipating our obvious questions, Joe smiled. “Yes, we had skis—Austrian skis, and yes, we used them. We found the anti-Nazi farm family which had been vetted in advance, and soon had radio contact with General Bradley’s 12th Army Group in France. Our broadcasts were of course in code. Once we had established an observation post above the main north-south pass from Germany into Austria, our next job was to report in detail major military traffic in either direction. This was considered important at the time—remember, Hitler was promoting his plan for Festung Europa, Fortress Europe, a final refuge for the Third Reich, in the German, Austrian and Italian Alps.” Frankenstein grinned at us. “My German sources told me that’s why the 10th Mountain was inserted at the last minute in the Apennines, to deny the southern boundaries of Fortress Europe!”

Joe paused, stretched and ordered more (American) coffee. “Our next mission was much riskier; to capture a German officer, interrogate him, and radio the results to Bradley. And this is when I got the crazy idea that landed me in Innsbruck last February!”

“The next phase turned out to be amazingly easy. We had seen dozens of German jeeps (Volkswagens), traveling back and forth, sometimes without escort. I guess they never dreamed there were enemies in the hills! Our plan was to locate a small side road off a narrow place in the highway, and stage our ambush there. I was to spot our victims with field glasses, and signal Kurt (my partner) to drop a pre-cut tree across the road. It worked perfectly. The Volks stopped short, the driver got out to move the tree, and in minutes we had both officer and driver tied in the back seat, removed the tree, and had pulled the car up the side road and out of sight.”

### ***It Was War***

Frankenstein sighed, and rubbed his eyes. “I wish I didn’t have to tell you this, but as you all know, it was war, and we were in the heart of enemy country. We found a small hay barn nearby, and took the Germans there for questioning. Both were loyal Nazis, neither would, in spite of our threats, tell us anything. It was then I realized that the officer looked a lot like me, and the driver could have been Kurt’s cousin. What if, I thought—what if?”

“Rummaging through the officer’s dispatch case, I found what I wanted, the orders for his next station, and all of his personal papers. Innsbruck! At Kesselring’s Army headquarters! The perfect place to report on preparations for Festung Europa! Telling Kurt the rough outlines of my plans in English, I ordered the two Germans to shed their uniforms and boots, and step outside. We walked them to a nearby ravine, both shivering from the cold, and the sure knowledge of their fates.”

Frankenstein sighed again and looked at us. “You’ve been there. You know how hard it is.” McJury reached across the table, and squeezed Joe’s arm. “We know. No need for apologies.” Encouraged, the OSS veteran went on with his incredible tale of clandestine warfare.

“After dark that night, we returned by Volkswagen to our farm headquarters, creeping along deserted roads with just the machine’s blackout lights. We garaged the jeep in the farmer’s barn, telling the family nothing the captured jeep didn’t already tell them. Then by candlelight in our room, we completed the details of my next impossible venture.”

Noting our eager interest, he hurried on. “The next day we told the family we were going on a short reconnaissance, and headed for Innsbruck in the Volkswagen, each of us correctly attired in our doppelganger’s uniform. I was amazed that there was only one guard station on the long road, which we passed with a brisk salute from the guards. In Innsbruck, I inquired our way in colloquial German, and by three that afternoon I was reporting to the officer of the day at Kesselring’s army group headquarters as “Leutnant Hoffman” from the appropriate Munich office. Kurt abandoned the Volks in a military parking lot, stripping it of any papers, hitched a ride with a Munich-bound truck convoy, and was back at the farm the next day.

### ***It Sounds Unbelievable***

Frankenstein saw his audience was skeptical about this latest twist to his story. “I know it sounds unbelievable, but I was able to function for three months as Lieutenant Hoffman. With the special OSS radio I’d brought in my gear, perched in the top-floor window of my apartment building, I reported to Kurt once a week. But as you know, there was little positive news to report in those days, the once-proud German Wehrmacht was being beaten on every front. I heard of your major offensive on April 14 in the Apennines, then the very next day my make-believe world collapsed around me.”

Joe stood up, stretched, then hunched in his chair again. “There’s little more to tell. I was seated at my desk when a colleague came in, his face all smiles. Hoffman, he said. You won’t believe it! There’s a buddy of yours here from Munich! Well of course the buddy knew I wasn’t Hoffman, and in a matter of hours, I was stripped of my uniform, belt and pistol, and hustled into a cell garbed in some kind of gray cotton coveralls. Two weeks later, I was court-martialed, and sentenced to die by firing squad on May 10, 1945. As you know well, General Von Vietinghoff, who had succeeded Kesselring, signed an armistice with your General Hays effective May 2<sup>nd</sup>, and a general armistice was signed on May 8<sup>th</sup>. A few days later, a captain from the American 42<sup>nd</sup> Division appeared outside my cell with my German jailer. At last, my secret, OSS-kind of war was over!”

We sat there, blown away by the implications of Joe’s story. “Worked in German headquarters for three months! Scheduled to be executed May 10<sup>th</sup>!” but we were to hear no more. Joe got up, smiled, and shook our hands. “Luck of the Frankensteins!” he said, and “Auf wiedersehen—keep in touch!” and walked into the night. None of us, I believe, ever saw him again.



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October 1, 2016 to December 31, 2016

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