



# Journal of the New England Ski Museum

Spring 2017

Issue Number 104

## The Mountain Troops and Mountain Culture in Postwar America Part Three of the Museum's 2016 Exhibit

By Jeff Leich



Denver Public Library, Western History Collection

*Whiteface in New York opened in January 1958 with former 86th Regiment medic Arthur Draper as general manager. Draper was a New York Times writer who resigned to work as a forest ranger in upstate New York before the war. Wounded on Mount della Torraccia and with two Bronze stars, Draper returned to New York after the war and was instrumental in picking out the site for a new location for a state-funded ski area after its Marble Mountain location proved untenable. The second manager of Whiteface was Hal Burton, a veteran of the Columbia Icefields expedition, the 2662 detachment to Terminello, and author of a book on the 10th. In later years, 86th veteran Stan Heidenreich oversaw construction of trails, lifts and snowmaking at the mountain in preparation for the 1980 Winter Olympic Games.*

### Outdoor Recreation

Graduating from Dartmouth in 1938, where he had been a prominent member of the Outing Club, John A. Rand was hired as assistant director of the club just before the hurricane of September 1938 swept through New England, leaving the club's extensive trail network largely obliterated by a tangle of downed trees. Even the campus, downtown Hanover and surrounding towns lost many stately trees, blocking traffic for days. Rand mobilized the outing club and its affiliated groups like the Dartmouth Mountaineering Club to clear downed trees

and reopen roads, and their success in this emergency work was considered a high point in the history of the outing club.<sup>1</sup>

In 1942 Rand was elevated to general manager of the DOC, days before he was called for service in the Army. As a student he had served on early ski patrols in the Tuckerman Ravine and Wildcat areas under the direction of the Forest Service and the AMC's Joe Dodge before the advent of the National Ski Patrol, and when that group was organized he became an early member, as indicated by his designation as national patrolman

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# New England Ski Museum

Paumgarten Family Archival Center

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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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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

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As I write this there are still three ski resorts open but for me the season is over. The one exception of course will be the annual May trip to Tuckerman Ravine. With just shy of 50 days with skis on, I have nothing to complain about and much fun reflecting on some of the best skiing I personally have had in some time with great friends and family. The most gratifying was to make a half

dozen runs with my mom at the tender age of 84 at Ski Sundown in Connecticut. She hasn't missed a beat!

Unfortunately for the Museum, due to the thaw in early March, we were forced to cancel our Bretton Woods Nordic Marathon for the second year in a row. On the other hand the 21<sup>st</sup> annual Hannes Schneider Meister Cup race was a great success though arguably the coldest one to date. The frigid weather didn't keep 10<sup>th</sup> Mountain veteran Dick Calvert from putting on a great performance at 93 years young, speed suit and all. Good going Dick!!

Greg Connolly our North Conway expansion Capital Campaign Committee Chair, his committee members and the local volunteer group known as the Downhill Divas have made enormous strides in raising cash and pledges for this exciting project. We have the final goal of \$1.7 million in our sights, but we need your help to put us over the top. Thank you in advance for your help. By now you have received, or you will shortly, a letter from Greg asking for contributions to help with this expansion. Anything you can offer will be greatly appreciated. We were very excited to learn recently that the exterior work on the new location has begun.

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## Director's Report

By Jeff Leich



The end of ski season for me came on April 29 when Wildcat opened for one last day amid a rapidly evaporating snowpack. Somewhat compensating for the fading away of another winter was the excitement of seeing work begin on our Eastern Slope branch building, as roofers staged their scaffolding at the old North Conway Community

Center building.

This first step of renovation of the building by installation of insulation panels and new shingles on the roof should avert the kind of crisis some members may recall that the museum suffered when the Franconia Notch building opened in December 1982,

While the name Hannes Schneider resonates with us all, I've never had a full appreciation of Hannes' roots. That changed on my first trip to Austria, specifically to St. Anton this past April. My wife Cindy and I thought it was time to check up on young son Wyatt who has spent a semester in Vienna, the lucky guy. After a five hour train ride from Vienna to St. Anton we were greeted at the station by Christoph Schneider, grandson of Hannes. A short walk took us to the center of St. Anton, a quintessential Alpine village nestled in the Arlberg region.

Our home for the next five nights was Schneider Hof Hotel Garni. This fabulous boutique hotel is in the house that Hannes built back in 1923. Its original purpose was to provide lodging for pupils of the Skischule St. Anton which Hannes founded that year. Today it provides elegant lodging to guests from around the world. The restoration of this home undertaken by Christoph and Hannah provides an experience not to be forgotten. So if you have not been to Austria you must go, go to St. Anton and stay at the Schneider Hof!

Hannes Schneider left an indelible mark in St. Anton. It remains his town and both Christoph and Hannah carry on his name and tradition with gracious and remarkable style!

In closing I congratulate Bernie Weichsel for his recent induction to the US Ski and Snowboard Hall of Fame. Bernie has been an ardent promoter for the sport of skiing and riding for decades and has been a long standing member, former Board member and supporter of the New England Ski Museum.

I hope you enjoy your spring and summer and again I thank you for your interest in and support of the New England Ski Museum.

only to incur water damage to the interior when a wind storm peeled off a portion of that roof.

The Gibson Woodbury Charitable Foundation of North Conway will very generously underwrite not only this roof replacement, but the installation of new exterior siding, two public restrooms and accessibility ramp, and various other exterior and electrical upgrades that will make the building habitable for us. These projects will begin in early June.

The exhibit firm HER Design of Marblehead, Massachusetts is in the final phase of defining the exhibition plans, and the committee headed by Phil Gravink that is overseeing this is quite enthusiastic on the plans as they are emerging. It is safe to predict that the exhibitions in North Conway will far exceed any we have had in the past in terms of graphic interest, quality of substance and presentation, and comprehensiveness of New

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England ski-related content. HER Design has a track record of creating exhibits for many nationally known museums such as the Smithsonian Institution, the National Baseball Hall of Fame, the Peabody Essex Museum and the Boston Public Library.

Among the elements planned for the exhibition hall will be a sweeping photomural of the headwall of Tuckerman Ravine that occupies the entire width of the exhibition hall, along with the ‘boot ladder’, which replicates the look and feel of the steep trail of footsteps that skiers climbing the headwall must surmount. Four vertically-oriented oversize topographic relief maps of the New England states locate geographic points that were important in the development of alpine skiing. Exhibit modules that feature the history of the World War II-era 10<sup>th</sup> Mountain Division, refinements in the sport of skiing such as ski trail construction, ski lifts, equipment improvements, ski instruction, iconic skiers and stories, and New England Olympic skiers all are contained under the auspices of the exhibition hall. Audio-visual displays, a mock snowbank holding four dozen pairs of unique or important skis, a cabinet detailing the

importance of the local Eastern Slope region, and an area for temporary exhibits round out the exhibition hall.

If no unforeseen obstacles preclude it, we anticipate having the Eastern Slope branch open by the end of 2017. The increased visitation of the North Conway branch, especially between November and June, will bring the Museum’s mission to collect, conserve and exhibit aspects of ski history to a vast new population.

Much-needed storage space for archive materials in the lower level repository of the North Conway branch will relieve pressure on the Paumgarten Family Archival Center once appropriate climate controls are assured.

North Conway was the site of the emergence of early alpine ski business nationally. The original North Conway Community Center was envisioned and funded by Harvey Dow Gibson, founder of Mount Cranmore, making our new location especially appropriate. We’ve even been told that just behind our building is the unmarked final resting place of Harvey Gibson’s beloved horse Gray Star.



*The former North Conway Community Center, seen here with its new roof, will soon host the Museum’s Eastern Slope Branch.*

## **EASTERN SLOPE EXPANSION CAMPAIGN**

*Donations and Pledges Received from October 1, 2015 to March 31, 2017*

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### **Double Platinum (\$50,000 and up)**

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The Gibson Woodbury Charitable Foundation  
Anthony Ruddy and Lisa Baumgartner  
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### **Platinum (\$25,000 and up)**

Anonymous  
Eastern Slope Inn and Attitash Mountain Village  
Al Fletcher, Jr.  
Peter and Stefi Reed Hastings  
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Jacques Parker  
Settlers Green

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## EASTERN SLOPE EXPANSION CAMPAIGN

*Donations and Pledges Received from October 1, 2015 to March 31, 2017*

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### **Platinum (\$25,000 and up) (Continued)**

Ski NH  
Stacey Sprague

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*John Rand, who served with the 87th from the Fort Lewis days through the end of combat in Italy, was offered a position on the ground floor of the new Aspen ski development in 1946, but elected to remain as general manager of the Dartmouth Outing Club. There he was a key figure for four decades in the club's wide-ranging outdoor programs that encompassed hiking and camping, the ski team, mountaineering club, backcountry cabins and trails, and emergency services.*

number 49. As such, he had no trouble with acceptance to the 87<sup>th</sup> at Fort Lewis.<sup>2</sup>

Rand served with the 87<sup>th</sup> all through the war, with stints at Fort Lewis, Fort Ord, Kiska, Camp Hale, Camp Swift, and Italy, where as a battalion sergeant major he earned two Bronze Stars, in the Apennines and the Po Valley.<sup>3</sup>

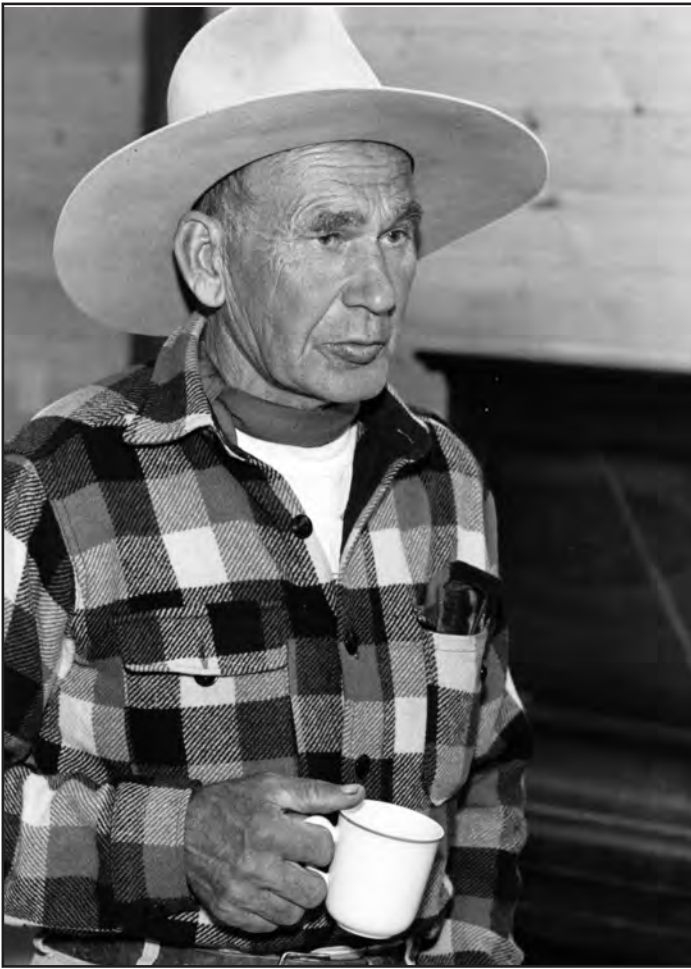
In October 1945 Rand was named director of the DOC, taking up where he had left off before his induction. He seems to have resisted an offer a year later to get involved with the fledgling ski area at Aspen, Colorado being organized by Friedl Pfeifer and other veterans of the 10<sup>th</sup>. "I have just talked to Walter Paepcke in regard to Johnny Rand," Pfeifer wrote to Minnie Dole. "He feels as I do that we should go ahead and try to work something out to have Johnny come to Aspen." Pfeifer envisioned a role

for Rand in which he would work with ski patrol, assist ski school director Curt Chase with organization, run ski races, and, drawing on a long-time DOC formula, develop a chain of backcountry trails and cabins.<sup>4</sup>

Declining the Aspen offer, Rand settled into a long career as director of the outing club, first addressing the maintenance needs of the trail network and cabins and shelters that had been let go during the war years. He was involved with all aspects of the DOC, including many that involved the college's ski programs. In late 1953 when the college decided it needed a modern ski area, Rand was a mainstay of the search committee that located the Dartmouth Skiway in Lyme.<sup>5</sup> When Walter Prager, Dartmouth ski coach before and after his time as 10<sup>th</sup> Mountain ski and mountaineering instructor, resigned suddenly in 1957, Rand helped choose his successor.<sup>6</sup> At a time when search and rescue in New Hampshire was not so formally organized as it is at present, Rand and the outing club at times provided much-needed manpower and oversight for large incidents. The February 1959 search for a missing airplane containing two Hanover physicians, Doctors Ralph Miller and Robert Quinn, both with outing club connections, triggered a massive search, including 500 Dartmouth students under Rand's direction. The tragic denouement that came when the downed plane was located in a wilderness area of the White Mountains was troubling to Rand, who had known both, but it also led to an increased emergency services program at the college.<sup>7</sup> Over his four decades with the DOC, Rand influenced generations of Dartmouth students as they learned outdoor skills that for many became lifelong pastimes.

While Dartmouth's outing club was predicated on outdoor recreation as a sideline to the larger institution's educational mission, two 10<sup>th</sup> veterans would do much to foster the concept of outdoor education and leadership as a field in itself in the early 1960s. Ernest "Tap" Tapley was chosen to build the earliest Outward Bound school in the U.S. in Marble, Colorado in 1961. Tapley, born in Amesbury, Massachusetts with one quarter Passamaquoddy ancestry, was seen skiing in Tuckerman Ravine by Lowell Thomas, who recommended him to the Sun Valley ski patrol, which soon hired him. At Camp Hale, he was assigned to 10<sup>th</sup> Recon, then left the 10<sup>th</sup> for detached duty in the Aleutians for the remainder of the war.<sup>8</sup>

Paul Petzoldt came to the 10<sup>th</sup> with a reputation as one of the foremost mountaineers in the country. Completely self-taught, his climbing career began at age 16 when he and a friend climbed the Grand Teton in jeans and cowboy boots. Petzoldt later realized the risks they had taken: "I knew that if I wanted to live to be an old mountaineer, I could not take such chances," he later wrote. Nevertheless, by the late 1930s he had established himself as a force in mountaineering, and was invited onto the 1938 K2 expedition, with future Quartermaster Office civilians Bob Bates and Bill House among others. The expedition failed to complete the first ascent of the daunting 28,250-foot peak, but Petzoldt and expedition leader Charles Houston reached 26,000 feet without oxygen before being turned back by bad



*Ernest "Tap" Tapley became involved with outdoor education beginning in 1961, when he was selected by the headmaster of Colorado Academy, one of the founders of the Colorado Outward Bound School, to take charge of construction of the first Outward Bound program in the U.S. at Marble. Tapley traveled to England to learn more about the youth outdoor system, and became its chief instructor when it opened in 1962. Tapley, of Passamaquoddy heritage, was a skilled outdoorsman from an early age, and served as a skiing and climbing instructor in the 10th. After several years with Colorado Outward Bound, he left to assist Paul Petzoldt, another COBS instructor who was opening the National Outdoor Leadership School. Tapley left a deep impression as the archetype of an outdoorsman with the keenest survival skills on those he taught at the two outdoor organizations..*

weather. It was the highest elevation any Americans had reached to that point.<sup>9</sup>

As a staff sergeant with the 10<sup>th</sup> Medics, Petzoldt joined a 10<sup>th</sup> Recon-MTG ski expedition in January 1944 from Leadville to Aspen that included Tap Tapley and future first ascent record-holder Fred Beckey. The trip was led by Captain John Jay, commander of the 10<sup>th</sup> Recon contingent. At one point, Jay and Petzoldt, not under Jay's direct command, disagreed about the advisability of Jay's route selection in potential avalanche terrain. "Petzoldt was saying that the slope was ready to avalanche

and, by God, he was going to go around it," recalled 10<sup>th</sup> Recon private Chuck Hampton years later. With Jay's acquiescence, Petzoldt and a handful of men more concerned about avalanches than Captain Jay's good opinion of them took a slower, more roundabout route. Neither route slid, but "it was a measure of our respect for Petzoldt that we didn't necessarily think John Jay had been vindicated," Hampton wrote. "To us, it seemed more likely that we had simply been lucky."<sup>10</sup> Petzoldt's respect for the hazards found in the mountains was a hallmark of his approach that he communicated to thousands of budding outdoor leaders in the postwar decades.

Petzoldt and Tapley reunited in 1963 at the year-old Colorado Outward Bound School where Tapley was the chief instructor. Petzoldt was hired as mountaineering instructor and the pair worked together for several years at the Marble school. The focus of the Outward Bound movement, first developed in England, is on strengthening personality traits of self-confidence, perseverance and independence in youths through outdoor challenges, and the concept was successfully duplicated by a governing organization in schools in many countries.

In the early 1960s, Petzoldt saw a need for a shift of emphasis toward developing mountain leadership qualities among future trip organizers, and an equally important effort to introduce a sense of environmental sensitivity to the type of long-term outdoor expeditions that Outward Bound was operating. "As Paul grew in the business of outdoor education, he recognized the need for paying attention to environmental ethics," Jed Williams, Petzoldt's successor as instructor at COBS said.<sup>11</sup>

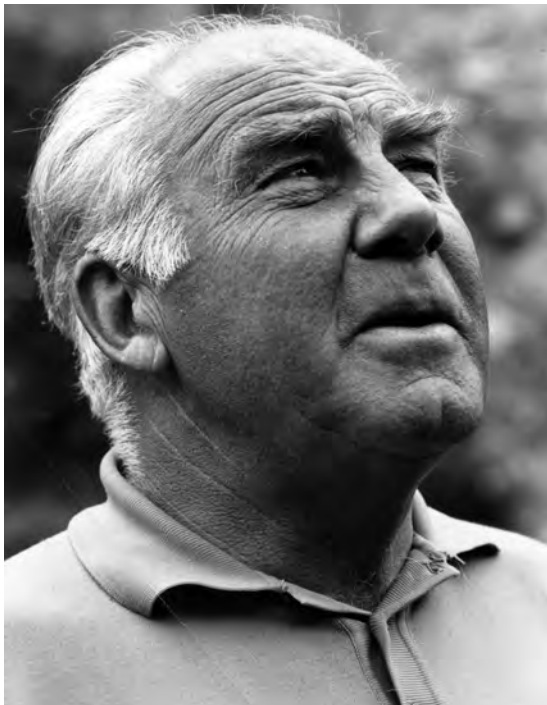
Accordingly, in 1965, Paul Petzoldt established the National Outdoor Leadership School in Lander, Wyoming, and brought Tap Tapley with him. "At Outward Bound we didn't try to teach them, we didn't go into any depth. That wasn't our purpose," Petzoldt said in a 1995 interview. "We've got to train people, got to train leaders who can go back and teach people in their community."<sup>12</sup> Using the Wind River Range as their classroom, Petzoldt, Tapley and a corps of instructors combined outdoor education and environmental awareness with month-long wilderness treks and mountaineering ascents. The program expanded to other venues, and in 1970 Tapley started a kayaking and sailing program for NOLS in Baja California. In 1975, for reasons that remain obscure, Paul Petzoldt left the school in a dispute with the board of directors, but for the rest of their lives, both Petzoldt and Tapley exerted a lasting influence on the thousands of students and staff that went through their programs, and the school itself, now with over 250,000 graduates, continues to expand on the precepts of its founder.<sup>13</sup>

Another MTG trooper who was present on the February 1944 ski trek from Leadville over the Continental Divide to Aspen—which today is called the Trooper Traverse and has been repeated by present-day ski mountaineers—was Fred Beckey. Born Friedrich Wolfgang Beckey in Düsseldorf, Germany in 1923, Beckey was 2 when his parents moved to the U.S. and lived in Seattle. In his

*Continued on page 10*



*Paul Petzoldt, second from the left, is shown here at Camp Hale. According to the 1995 documentary *Fire on the Mountain*, when he was first at Camp Hale, while on KP duty he was recognized by an officer as the mountaineer who had climbed higher than any other American on K2, and was soon set to work devising methods of evacuating wounded soldiers from high-angle situations. As a medic on the February 1944 Leadville to Aspen ski expedition, he was appropriately wary of potential avalanche slopes, a caution that conflicted with the judgement of officers with less awareness of the hazard.*



*The National Outdoor Leadership School was founded by Paul Petzoldt in 1965 in Lander, Wyoming. The mission was to train future leaders of outdoor groups in the practice of safe travel in backcountry wilderness while imbuing a sense of environmental ethics in students, a concept just emerging in the mid-1960s. Operating from Sinks Canyon near Lander, NOLS instructors led students on 30-day expeditions in the Wind River Range. Since then NOLS has expanded to many different locations, and has graduated thousands from its programs.*



*Fred Beckey, a ski and climbing instructor in MTG and 10th Recon, is the alpinist credited with more first ascents than any other American. Beckey was still climbing in his early nineties. Here he is pictured using Prussick knots to ascend a fixed rope while climbing Lighthouse Tower in the Cascades in 1949.*



*University of Washington Libraries, Special Collections, Bob and Ira Spring Photographs, negative envelope 3410*

*University of Washington Libraries, Special Collections, Bob and Ira Spring Photographs, negative #17995*



*Fred Beckey, left, and Les McDonald raise their glasses while shooting an advertisement for Canadian Club whiskey in 1958 near Mount Garibaldi, British Columbia. In addition to his prodigious record of first ascents, Beckey authored multiple guidebooks and descriptive works of the routes he pioneered.*



*William Lowell Putnam III, left, and Cornelius (K) Molenaar shared an interest in mountaineering, and both became geologists after the war. Here they are seen on Cheyenne Mountain, Colorado, where they would climb on days off from Camp Carson. Seen here as a private, Putnam went to OCS and returned to the 85th as a lieutenant, then earned Bronze and Silver stars in combat. After the war, Putnam contributed to outdoor education through the Appalachian Mountain Club Mountain Leadership Committee, and was a leading figure in organizing search and rescue groups in New Hampshire, including the Mount Washington Volunteer Ski Patrol. On a larger stage, Putnam was a mainstay of the American Alpine Club and foremost explorer of the Selkirk Range in British Columbia.*

*Continued from page 7*

teens, he learned rock-climbing, first with the Boy Scouts and then with a member of the Mountaineers, the northwestern mountaineering association. By 1940, he was an accomplished climber, making the first ascent of Forbidden Peak in the Cascades with his brother Helmut and a Mountaineers group.<sup>14</sup>

Beckey “was a loner in the 10<sup>th</sup> Mountain, and he was a loner after the 10<sup>th</sup> Mountain,” recalled Bob Parker in a 2005 interview. “I went to college with him, and we never saw him.” Beckey left the University of Washington with a business administration degree, and worked in a series of jobs in the printing industry. His chief focus though was on climbing, and he became a master at ferreting out unclimbed routes and making first ascents with a rotating cast of companions, while remaining largely outside the official climbing associations. When Fred Beckey is the subject, journalists and friends use terms like “the original climber dirtbag,” “still living out of the back of his car,” “I’ll never let him know where I live,” mixed with “icon,” “idol,” “elemental force,” and “statesman and mentor.”<sup>15</sup>

Beckey is widely credited with more first ascents than any other climber in history, in mountain ranges in three continents. As with his virgin routes, Beckey made a mark as an author of gems of mountaineering literature: since 1949, he has published numerous books and guidebooks to his ascents, culminating in the most recent, *Fred Beckey’s 100 Favorite North American Climbs*, published in 2011.

“You’ve got to be physically pretty strong to be any good at it

at all,” Beckey told a *New York Times* reporter in 2008. “You’ve got to have a hard-core mental attitude.... You need to have the capability or desire to accept a certain amount of risk. A lot of it is maybe spiritual, not a religious type, but you have to have an affinity with the outdoors.”<sup>16</sup> Beckey, still climbing in his nineties, could be describing the traits that made the 10<sup>th</sup> Mountain Division.

As a private at Camp Hale in 1944, William Lowell Putnam and a companion once bet that they could walk the 75 miles from Pando to Glenwood Springs in less than 24 hours, and collected.<sup>17</sup> Similar acts of stamina and bravado would characterize Putnam throughout his life. Explorer, mountaineer, television broadcast pioneer, mountain rescue authority, author, American Alpine Club Honorary President, and principal figure of the Lowell Observatory in Flagstaff, Putnam was larger than life.

Not long after the Glenwood Springs marathon hike, Putnam was detailed to Officer Candidate School at Fort Benning, and returned to the 10<sup>th</sup> as a lieutenant just as the division was embarking for Italy. There, he was wounded in an early action on February 4, leaving him with shrapnel in his chest that would restrict his ability to climb at high elevation thereafter<sup>18</sup>. Back with Company L 85<sup>th</sup> after recuperating, he was awarded the Silver Star at Castel d’Aiano and a Bronze Star in the Po Valley.<sup>19</sup>

Returning to undergraduate life at Harvard that was interrupted by his service with the 10<sup>th</sup>, Putnam studied geology and was prominent in the Harvard Mountaineering Club, where he continued a long familiarity with New Hampshire’s White

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Mountains. Soon he embarked on explorations in the Selkirk Mountains of western Canada, to which he would return year after year, ultimately making an estimated 200 first ascents. Apart from the world of alpinism, he opened the first commercially licensed UHF television station in the U.S., WWLP in Springfield, Massachusetts. One of the early features of the station was the weekly “Skier’s Corner” which then-host Cal Conniff believes was the first television program in the U.S.

At a time before volunteer mountain rescue teams were organized in the northeast, Putnam was one of a small cadre of climbers who were called on by state agencies when high-angle emergency situations arose. On more than one occasion, New Hampshire state authorities summoned Putnam to the cliffs of Cannon Mountain to lead technical rescue teams when rock climbers suffered calamities out of reach of those search and rescue groups existing at the time.<sup>20</sup> In October 1964, when Baxter State Park ranger Ralph Heath was missing on his own rescue attempt of hiker Margaret Isvic off of Katahdin’s Knifedge, Bill Putnam was one of the mountain rescue specialists flown to the scene.<sup>21</sup> Putnam was chairman of the Appalachian Mountain Club’s Mountain Leadership Committee in 1958, when it organized outdoor leadership workshops leading to certificates for those who led summer camp and other groups in the White Mountains.

These groups were perceived as lacking in mountain awareness, and there was the uneasy perception among Forest Service managers that large groups of summer campers lacking in suitable clothing, equipment and leaders’ judgment might create a multiple casualty incident. The workshops evolved into six-day seminars with a variety of instructors, including Putnam, which based their operations in the huts of the White Mountains. This effort was seen as generally very successful, and disseminated mountain sense to a good number of youth leaders.<sup>22</sup>

“He swings an axe like a French-Canadian lumberjack,” wrote New Hampshire game warden Paul Doherty of Putnam after he accompanied him on a Selkirk trek. “He never runs out of steam. He pushes hard and has reason for this push, but there are times when the men he leads would like to feed him to the elkhound.” (Putnam seemingly always had canine companionship, and once got his dog elected a member of the AAC). “But he never fails to come through. He will go first over the bad places and handle the rope in the difficult spots. He knows mountains inside and out; he is at much at home in a trackless forest as he is on a steep alpine snow ridge.”<sup>23</sup>



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## Endnotes

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<sup>3</sup> “T/Sgt John A. Rand,” National Association of the 10<sup>th</sup> Mountain Division World War II Database, Denver Public Library. Hooke, *Reaching that Peak*, 53.

<sup>4</sup> Friedl Pfeifer to Minot Dole, November 12, 1946, Denver Public Library, Dole Papers, WH 1001, Series 2, Box 17, FF 303.

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<sup>6</sup> Stephen L. Waterhouse, ed., *Passion for Skiing*. (Lebanon, New Hampshire: Whitman Communications, 2010), 36-37.

<sup>7</sup> Hooke, *Reaching that Peak*, 66-67.

<sup>8</sup> Jeffrey Lowdermilk, Anita Stalter, John Braman and Daniel Newman, “Ernest L. “Tap” Tapley,” <https://www.cobs.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/03/2015-3-24-Taps-Obit-A.pdf>, accessed March 31, 2016.

<sup>9</sup> Robert H. Bates, *The Love of Mountains Is Best*. (Portsmouth, New Hampshire: Peter E. Randall Publishers, 1994), 138-139.

<sup>10</sup> Chuck Hampton, “The Leadville-Aspen Ski Trek, January, 1944” in Andy Black and Chuck Hampton, *The 10<sup>th</sup> Recon/MTG*. (privately printed, copy in New England Ski Museum collection, 1996), 55-56.

<sup>11</sup> Christopher S. Wren, “Paul Petzoldt is Dead at 91; Innovator in Rock Climbing,” New York Times, October 9, 1999, <http://www.nytimes.com/1999/10/09/us/paul-petzoldt-is-dead-at-91-innovator-in-rock-climbing.html>, accessed March 31, 2016.

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<sup>13</sup> Diane Shoutis to Jeff Leich, e-mail message, May 27, 2016.

<sup>14</sup> Peter Blecha, “Fred Beckey, Climber and Environmentalist,” *The Free Online Encyclopedia of Washington State History*, Historylink.org Essay 9373, accessed May 27, 2016.

<sup>15</sup> Robert W. Parker, transcript of oral history interview with Jeff Leich, December 8, 2005. Blecha, “Fred Beckey.” Michael J. Ybarra, “The Old Man, His Mountains,” *Wall Street Journal*, November 10, 2011, <http://www.wsj.com/articles/SB10001424052970204485304576645473106063438>, accessed March 31, 2016.

<sup>16</sup> Michael Brick, At 85, More Peaks to Conquer and Adventures to Seek, *New York Times*, December 15, 2008, [http://www.nytimes.com/2008/12/16/sports/othersports/16beckey.html?\\_r=0](http://www.nytimes.com/2008/12/16/sports/othersports/16beckey.html?_r=0), accessed May 28, 2016.

<sup>17</sup> William Lowell Putnam, *Green Cognac: The Education of a Mountain Fighter*. (New York: AAC Press, 1991)73-78.,

<sup>18</sup> T.C Price Zimmermann, “William Lowell Putnam III, 1924-2014, American Alpine Journal, 57, 89, 2015, <http://publications.americanalpineclub.org/articles/13201213367/print> accessed May 28, 2016.

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<sup>20</sup> Zimmermann, “William Lowell Putnam.”

<sup>21</sup> Peter W. Kick, *Desperate Steps: Life, Death and Choices Made in the Mountains of the Northeast*. (Boston, Appalachian Mountain Club Books, 2015), 9.

<sup>22</sup> William Lowell Putnam, “Mountain Leadership Committee,” *Appalachia*, New Series XXIV, 12, December 1958, 274-275. Bradford F. Swan, “Grade I Leadership Workshop,” *Appalachia*, New Series XXVI, 12, December, 1960, 254-256.

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## Ski Pioneers of the 10th Mountain Division

The Denver Public Library, Western History Collection



*The one-time silver mining boom town of Aspen, Colorado was familiar to many members of the 10th during the war, as its Roch Run was an attractive ski destination for weekends away from Camp Hale, and for the welcoming hospitality of the Hotel Jerome. The Aspen detachment of the 87th, 30 men and 2 officers, spent several months camped at Ashcroft in the fall of 1942, testing the premise that soldiers without special training could learn to erect simple bridges and aerial tramways under the direction of engineering officers. This photograph of 10th troopers in Aspen may depict members of that detachment as it prepared to depart Aspen for Camp Hale in November 1942. Many soldiers of the division noted that Aspen might be fertile ground for postwar development as a ski town.*

Contributions of veterans of the 10<sup>th</sup> Mountain like Paul Petzoldt and Gerry Cunningham to mountaineering and outdoor recreation were real and lasting, but the development of ski areas would prove to be a much more fertile field for 10<sup>th</sup> veterans searching for a way to make a living in the mountains.

Colorado was the first state to see the influence of returning 10<sup>th</sup> soldiers, not surprising given that thousands had been exposed to the alpine allure of the high Rocky Mountains at Camp Hale. Even before the 10<sup>th</sup> went overseas, Friedl Pfeifer and Fritz Benedict had noted the potential of Aspen, and there were already some existing expectations among town residents that skiing could bring prosperity to the faded mining town.<sup>1</sup> Andre Roch and Ted Ryan had promoted nearby Ashcroft as a future skiing mecca in the 1930s, and the local ski club had opened the Roch Run on Ajax Mountain that attracted scores of troopers on leave from Camp Hale.

While the 10<sup>th</sup> was still in Italy, corporate heavyweight Walter Paepcke of the Container Corporation of America had begun investing in the town<sup>2</sup>, and soon after the war was over, he became a lead financier

for the development of a ski area on Ajax with three principal figures from the 10<sup>th</sup>, Friedl Pfeifer, John Litchfield and Percy Rideout. Aspen opened in the winter of 1946-7, and a core of 10<sup>th</sup> Mountain veterans including Curt Chase, Pete Seibert, and Steve Knowlton soon gathered in the distressed town. Unlike many cities in the immediate aftermath of the war, Aspen had cheap and plentiful housing. Walter Paepcke's interest was in establishing a cultural center in the mountains, and his Aspen Institute for Humanistic Studies immediately drew some of the world's leading creative figures. The town managed to attract the FIS world championships in 1950, setting the stage for Aspen to emerge as one of the most important and prestigious ski areas in the country.

Almost simultaneously with Aspen, the Denver Chamber of Commerce appointed 10<sup>th</sup> veteran Larry Jump and Amherst ski racer Sandy Schaufler to make a study of possible ski area sites accessible from the city.<sup>3</sup> They identified a high alpine cirque on the western side of Loveland Pass, and in May 1946 formed a corporation along with Dick Durrance, who had trained paratroops to ski in 1942 in an experiment that paralleled the 10<sup>th</sup>, and Max and Edna Dercum, who owned mining claims in the bowl.<sup>4</sup> The area opened on a shoestring

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in the winter of 1947, then gained a more stable footing when Jump married a Bennington graduate working as a secretary at the area. Marjorie “Marnie” Brown served as a WAVE in the war, and as a member of a well-to-do steel family was able to undergird the finances of the new area.<sup>5</sup> Once the area was on a sound operational footing, Jump became the U.S. distributor for Poma ski lifts, the affordable disc-shaped surface tows invented by Polish engineer Jean Pomagalski that opened up large swaths of ski terrain around the country.<sup>6</sup>

Unlike Aspen, the valley that now contains the town and ski resort of Vail was little-known to soldiers of the 10<sup>th</sup> who trained at Camp Hale, as no town existed on the future site, only a few scattered ranches. Pete Seibert, an MTG and 86<sup>th</sup> sergeant who was critically wounded at the village of Monteforte in March, 1945 had a difficult recovery, but was sufficiently recuperated to race in the 1950 FIS championships at Aspen. Searching for a site to develop as a ski area, he was alerted to the north-facing slopes of Vail with its expansive back bowls by Earl Eaton, an area native who had helped build Camp Hale.<sup>7</sup> Seibert recruited a core group of investors and went about quietly acquiring

land in the valley while obtaining Forest Service permits for use of the federal acreage on the higher slopes. He soon enlisted fellow 10<sup>th</sup> veteran and *Skiing* magazine editor Bob Parker to handle marketing, though Parker’s role would grow to encompass operations as well. In 1960, ski area consultant Sel Hannah wrote that Vail’s “ski terrain is so superior to most areas that it can draw skiers from all parts of the country—given proper promotion. Future expansion is almost unlimited.”<sup>8</sup> Hannah’s prediction was sound not just for the Vail slopes he surveyed, but for the adjoining Beaver Creek area that the Vail investors championed as a site for the 1972 Winter Olympic Games. The Olympics were held elsewhere in 1972, but Beaver Creek opened in 1980 after a wrenching 4-year process of obtaining Forest Service approval, in which Parker played a pivotal role.<sup>9</sup> Beaver Creek is known around the world for hosting the World Ski Championships in 1989, 1999 and 2015, and holds the first World Cup race of the season in the country each year. It shares with Aspen the distinction of the being most prominent ski resort to feel the influence of 10<sup>th</sup> Mountain Division veterans.

*Continued on page 15*



Aspen Historical Society

*Friedl Pfeifer, left, and John Litchfield are shown in the summer of 1946 at Aspen as they worked to get a ski area operational. Friedl Pfeifer was a native of St. Anton, Austria, where he had been a top ski racer and important instructor in the Hannes Schneider Ski School, then the best-known font of ski technique in the world. Pfeifer had emigrated to America and run the ski school at Sun Valley before the war, then served in 10th Recon/MTG at Camp Hale. Before he left for Italy with the 10th, he met with the ski club in Aspen and discussed plans for bringing skiing to the town. Litchfield, a Mainer who was a stalwart of the Dartmouth ski team in the 1930s, was a captain in the division headquarters of the 10th, and after the war was a co-director of the ski school at Aspen with Friedl Pfeifer and Percy Rideout. Here Litchfield is shown in a uniform shirt with the 10th patch on his left shoulder.*



*On arriving in Aspen, John Litchfield and his wife Jean renovated a restaurant and bar into the Red Onion and developed it into a lively tavern in the rising ski town. Litchfield, Pfeifer and Rideout were the first of many 10th veterans to gravitate to postwar Aspen: others included Bud Phillips, Fritz Benedict, Steve Knowlton, Pete Seibert, Bil Dunaway, and Bob Parker.*

*Steve Knowlton, seen here in Aspen in 1954 with his son Jamie, was a Holderness and University of New Hampshire ski racer who went into the 10th Recon and served in Italy. In the interval between the end of hostilities and the 10th's return to the States, Knowlton ruled the ski races held on the Grossglockner, where he placed third, and Mount Mangart, which he won. He raced on the U.S. ski team in the 1948 Winter Olympic Games, and competed in the FIS championships at Aspen in 1950. By that time, he had opened his Golden Horn restaurant in the town, which was famous for the raucous floor shows that he masterminded.*





Even before joining the mountain troops in April 1942, Larry Jump had been captured by the German military in 1939 as he served as a volunteer in the French ambulance service. He picked up skiing as a student at Exeter and Dartmouth, where he was captain of the 'B' ski team. He was wounded in Italy with the 87th, and was awarded a Bronze Star. In Colorado in 1946, responding to a prospectus of the U.S. Forest Service, Jump recruited his fellow Dartmouth skier Dick Durrance, and with Thor Grosword and Sandy Schauffler they formed a company to develop Arapahoe Basin. Raising funds in the immediate postwar period proved challenging, but the area opened with a rope tow on the upper mountain in 1946-47. In 1947 Jump married Marjorie "Marnie" Brown of Pittsburgh, who had come west to ski. Marnie Jump became an active partner in the enterprise in the first years, especially with the ski school and a ground-breaking amputee ski program.

*Continued from page 13*

One of the many areas that did business with Larry Jump's Poma distributorship was Mount Bachelor in Bend, Oregon. Bill Healy, a former private in the 86<sup>th</sup> headquarters company who had won the division boxing title in his weight division, was a primary figure in bringing a ski resort to central Oregon<sup>10</sup>. Along with a small group of like-minded skiers, Healy rounded up investors and after the delays, setbacks and complications common to all ski area ventures, obtained a Forest Service permit to develop the mountain.<sup>11</sup> The area opened with Healy as general manager and its Poma lift operational for the

winter of 1959, then added a Riblet double chair in the fall of 1961. Healy continually scouted new terrain, and seven more chairlifts were added in the 1960s and 1970s as the ski resort grew under his management, reaching 257,000 skier visits in the winter of 1975.<sup>12</sup> In 1980 Bill Healy was diagnosed with Lou Gehrig's disease, losing his ability to ski. He continued his daily rounds of the mountain in a snowcat, and stayed active until his 1988 retirement, five years after the summit of the 9,065-foot mountain was reached with lift access. Mount Bachelor today is the largest ski area in the state of Oregon.

In the mid-1950s, skiers exploring the Cascade Range for ski area potential focused on the Corral Pass area northeast of Mount Rainier. Their attention soon shifted to the south to the Silver Creek valley whose upper reaches drained Round Mountain and Crystal Mountain. In 1958, Crystal Mountain, Inc. was formed with a board of 15, including Roe Duke Watson, one of the ski mountaineers who had made exploratory trips. Watson was a member of the Columbia Icefields expedition that tested Studebaker Weasels, and a 10<sup>th</sup> Recon/MTG soldier who ended the war with the rank of captain and a Bronze Star.<sup>13</sup> Unlike Mount Bachelor, whose organization struggled to raise \$100,000 for its first chairlift, Crystal Mountain was relatively well-funded, having raised \$852,000 in a stock offering purchased by 824 families by July, 1959.<sup>14</sup> The area opened in for the winter of 1963, delayed for several years by the need to obtain state and county funding for an access road. Two double chairlifts constructed in series brought skiers to the summit of Round Mountain, since re-named Crystal Mountain, and a T-bar and seven rope tows added to the capacity.<sup>15</sup> By 1965, the chairlift count was four, and the area had hosted the NCAA championships and the national alpine championships, which included the venerable Silver Skis race once held on Rainier. "Crystal was the first to take the plunge as a resort in the Northwest," Watson claimed, differentiating Crystal from the mostly day-use only areas of the region on the basis of the condominiums, the first in Washington, constructed at the base in 1963.<sup>16</sup> In 1968, Ed Link, who had known Watson in the Army, was hired as general manager and would serve in that capacity until 1981. Link, also a 10<sup>th</sup> Recon veteran, had left Camp Hale in December 1943 to command the unique 2662 detachment that trained British troopers at their Mountain School at Terminello, Italy.<sup>17</sup> When Link arrived at Crystal Mountain as general manager, the financial outlook was troubled, with the resort over-extended, but with his retirement the organization had no debt. "Everything that's good about Crystal you can credit to Ed Link," an area skier told a *Seattle Post-Intelligencer* reporter. "Everything that's bad—which isn't much—is despite him."<sup>18</sup>

Locating, planning, financing, and building a ski area on a major scale requires the hard work, funds, acumen, persistence and luck of a large group of people. Veterans of the 10<sup>th</sup> Mountain Division were prominent in many ski area development projects after the war, but none of the veterans acted as individuals, and many more former mountain troopers were important in hundreds of ski-based activities that were not in the limelight. Nonetheless, more than any other group, and unsurprisingly given their self-selected military service in the alpine world, veterans of the 10<sup>th</sup> shaped how America skied in the postwar years.

<sup>1</sup> John and Frankie O'Rear, *The Aspen Story*. (New York: A.S. Barnes and

*Continued on page 20*



*This April 1961 aerial photograph of Arapahoe Basin shows the ski terrain in the central bowl that was developed in the early years by Larry Jump and his partners. Since then, the Pallavicini area to the lower right and Montezuma Bowl, on the far side of the summit tow terminal seen on the ridge in the center, have substantially expanded the acreage of the resort. The area's founders are commemorated in the five double diamond chutes in the Montezuma Bowl named Max (Dercum), Groswold, Durrance, Schaufler and Jump, while Marnie Jump is remembered in Marjorie's Bowl, just out of the photo to the lower left. As the U.S. distributor of Poma lifts when those surface tows were within the financial reach of community groups seeking to start ski areas across the country, Larry Jump was an important figure in the spread of skiing in the 1950s and 1960s.*





*This encampment of a detachment of the 10th was located at Vail Pass in September 1943. The valley in which the future resort of Vail would be built was not far from Camp Hale, and was certainly passed on U.S. Highway 6 by many soldiers, but the view from the road seemed nondescript, and the area's potential as a ski area went undiscovered for years even as people searched for prime ski area sites after the war.*



*Pete Seibert worked as a ski patroller in Aspen just after the war, then in 1950 attended L'Ecole Hotelière de Lausanne in Switzerland, learning the art of hotel management on the G.I. Bill. Returning to Colorado, he became manager of Loveland Pass ski area, then moved to Aspen Highlands in 1957. By then, Earl Eaton had taken Seibert on a March climb up the mountain just west of Vail Pass that Seibert decided he would spend his life developing.*



*Today the site of Vail, Colorado, the valley of Gore Creek was largely vacant land in the 1950s when Earl Eaton and Pete Seibert began making plans to develop it into a ski resort.*

*Vail became a success soon after it opened in 1962, and by the end of the decade was on its way to becoming one of the premier ski resorts in North America. Once Seibert and Eaton had assembled a team of investors including 10th veteran Ben Duke, Jr., that secured the financing at the heart of the success of the area, he recruited two 10th men, Bob Parker and Bill "Sarge" Brown, to help him run the marketing and operations side of the resort, and the growing municipality at the foot of the mountain. With the Vail area established, the organization moved to open a new ski area at Beaver Creek just to the west, to be the site of some events of the 1972 Winter Olympic Games. The Colorado electorate voted down the Games, but the Beaver Creek project proceeded, with permits obtained in the very challenging regulatory climate of the 1970s thanks in great part to Parker's persistence. This 1978 photograph records the beginning of construction at the Beaver Creek village site.*



*Bill Healy first skied at age 11 at Mount Hood, Oregon. He frequented the ski shop run in a Portland department store by Northwest ski pioneer Hjalmar Hvam. Healy was a gatekeeper at the 1939 Nationals at Mount Hood when future 10th trooper Toni Matt won the downhill. With his background, Healy easily qualified for the mountain troops. Following his service with the 86th headquarters company that earned him a Bronze Star, Healy got a degree in Forestry, specializing in furniture manufacturing in preparation for joining his family furniture business. Transferred to Bend to run the family store there, he joined the Skyliner Club and fell in with the local skiers.*



*In collaboration with others, including Bend native Gene Gillis, who would be named to the 1948 U.S. Olympic ski team and would work in ski area design at Stratton Mountain and Keystone, Bill Healy assembled a group of investors, obtained a Forest Service permit to start a ski area on Mount Bachelor, then called Bachelor Butte, and got the area started with a Poma lift in 1959. In 1983, lift access to the 9,065-foot summit was constructed, and Mount Bachelor is now the largest ski resort in the state.*



*Captain Roe Duke Watson, seen here in Italy in February 1945, among other assignments in the 10th, was commander of the climbing school at Seneca Rocks, with future Sierra Club and Friends of the Earth leader David Brower and Raffi Bedayn as his assistants. Watson was wounded on Mount della Torraccia on February 24 and received a Bronze Star.*



Duke Watson was a founding member of the board of Crystal Mountain, Inc., formed in Washington in 1958. Here, he points to terrain under Silver King Peak from Silver Queen Peak, soon after the area opened in 1963. Five years later, Ed Link, Watson's predecessor as commander of the Seneca Rocks climbing school in the 10th, came on as general manager of Crystal and guided its operations until 1981.

## Coda

"Well, there it is, a Division of men called Mountain Troops, composed of a few real mountaineers, many amateur mountain men, many good mule packers, many skiers and snowshoers, a great many who had received adequate Army training in mountains, but who were at heart flatlanders. There were some who couldn't ski, some who were scared of heights, some couldn't rappel, some couldn't pack a mule, some hated the sight of hills, some loved it. But they were all soldiers

and they could all fight, and they were with others who could both fight and climb and lead them through any mountains; and best of all they were proud as hell at being U.S. mountain troops!"

R. Livermore, Jr., *passing Gibraltar westbound on Troopship, To the N.S.P.S.*



## Endnotes

Co., 1966), 69-70.

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<sup>3</sup> "Laurence Jump and Arapahoe Basin Records Biographical Note, Denver Public Library, Laurence (Larry) Jump and Arapahoe Basin Records, WH1220, 2004.

<sup>4</sup> Edna Strand Dercum, *"It's easy, Edna, it's downhill all the way."* (Dillon, Colorado: Sirpois Press, 1981), 46-47.

<sup>5</sup> Virginia Culver, "Marnie Jump dies at 92; helped launch Arapahoe Basin Ski Area," *The Denver Post*, June 29, 2001.

<sup>6</sup> Laurence Jump Biographical Note, Denver Public Library.

<sup>7</sup> June Simonton, *Vail: Story of a Colorado Mountain Valley*. (Vail: Vail Chronicles, Inc., 1987), 58.

<sup>8</sup> Sel Hannah, "Vail Pass," Sel Hannah papers, New England Ski Museum, 2000.032.003.

<sup>9</sup> Bob Parker, Transcript of oral history interview with Jeff Leich, December 8, 2005, 38-42.

<sup>10</sup> Edwin G. Nilsson, "William A. "Bill" Healy, HQ-86," *Blizzard*, 12, 4,

4<sup>th</sup> Quarter 1983, 3. "PFC William A. Healy, Jr.," National Association of the 10<sup>th</sup> Mountain Division World War II Database, Denver Public Library.

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<sup>12</sup> "Mt. Bachelor History", <http://www.mtbachelor.com/info/history/>, accessed May 29, 2016.

<sup>13</sup> "Capt. Roe Duke Watson," National Association of the 10<sup>th</sup> Mountain Division World War II Database, Denver Public Library.

<sup>14</sup> Julie Van Pelt, *Crystal Mountain: Built by Skiers*. (Virginia Beach, Virginia: Donning Company Publishers, 2012), 30-31.

<sup>15</sup> Van Pelt, *Crystal Mountain*, 51.

<sup>16</sup> Emmett Watson, "Crystal Mountain: Resort Skiing Comes to the Northwest," *Skiing*, 18, 5, February 1966, 84. Van Pelt, *Crystal Mountain*, 95.

<sup>17</sup> Harold G. Sorensen, "The American Special Mountain Training Detachment," *American Ski Annual*, 1946, 54-61.

<sup>18</sup> Van Pelt, *Crystal Mountain*, 119.

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## A LOAF OF BREAD AND A PURPLE HEART

By **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.*

It had been a day so full of unusual and dangerous incidents that one more just didn't seem possible. So I thought little of it when a medic standing in our first chow line in days said to me, "You'd better come down after chow and get that wound fixed."

"What wound?" I said, having forgotten my forehead was crusted with dried blood. When I remembered, and agreed to visit the aid station, it was just another reminder that nothing is crazier, or potentially deadlier, than a day in combat. This had been one of those days.

It actually started the night before, when we had fought a blind battle with a Tiger tank. Hearing the tank crawling in the river bed below a bridge we were guarding, we began firing rifles and BARs at it, knowing our bullets were doing no damage.

In angry response to our wasp-bite bullets, the tank elevated its 88 millimeter gun and fired up at us, the shell pulverizing the bridge abutment, and shaking the whole structure beneath us. Then Sergeant Keyes got a bazooka out of a jeep, lay on the road's edge, and fired a couple of rounds into the dark where we could hear the tank's treads grinding over river stones. Both rounds exploded against something, and the grinding stopped. So we went back to directing the nearly constant flow in the dark of men and weapons that the following day would constitute the point of the Fifth Army's race across the Po Valley, and forgot about the tank.

Next morning, we were just a part of Task Force Duff, a long caterpillar of men and trucks and guns finally under way to the north. Not an hour into the march, a US-marked A20A attack bomber strafed the column with his 20 caliber guns, then turned and dumped a stick of 250 pound bombs directly on the trucks and men just 25 yards ahead of me.

### **Evil Looking Bombs**

I remember lying on my back in a road ditch, watching the evil looking bombs exit the bomb bay doors and fall in a cluster toward us. Next I knew, I lay in the cornfield by the road, having been tossed over the roadside berm by the concussion. We lost a number of killed and wounded from that A20A's bomb run, which our statisticians claimed was the work of a German-captured aircraft.

The rest of the day was just as confusing and dangerous. Probing a side road for the enemy, Les and I ran smack into a German road block.

Ditching the jeep, we had a brisk fire fight with the German gunners until they decided to pull out, but not before we both froze flat on the ground while a German grenade rolled down the farmhouse tile roof above us and exploded, harmlessly as luck would have it, right between us.

Later that day we pulled into San Benedetto Po, and instantly took shelter under our vehicles when a veritable rain of bricks, tile fragments and shrapnel littered the city's broad plaza, the result of a German barrage from across the river, shattering many of the city's ancient roofs and chimneys. Then came the order to guard the river's south bank. So I guess it wasn't surprising that I had completely forgotten the incident that had created by forehead wound, when the medic offered to patch it up.

It happened during one of the long waits, inevitable when a column is moving along a narrow road. Somewhere up ahead, the point unit had encountered German opposition. While they eliminated the danger, the rest of us had to sit and wait.

I was comfortably ensconced on the spare tire, manning one of our 50 caliber machine guns. The local Italians had been showering us with gifts. We already had a dozen eggs, several bottles of wine and a thousand Italian thank-yous. "Mille Grazie!, Molto Grazie!" came from every side. Then a farm lady, not to be left out, came running with her gift.

Simultaneously, the order came for us to pull out. As the jeep lurched forward, I just glimpsed a dark object in the air when something slammed into my forehead and dropped into the bed of the jeep. Momentarily stunned, I slumped down onto the jeep's frame, until a copious stream of blood filled my eyes. Stemming the blood flow with my filthy handkerchief, I stared in disbelief at the projectile on the floor. It was a loaf of Italian bread!

Don't confuse an Italian oven-baked loaf with one of our soft store-bought loaves. The inside of this bread is soft and delicious, but the crust, baked in an outdoor oven, and inserted and retrieved on a flat wooden shovel, is hard as a rock. It was such a projectile, thrown by a well-meaning farm lady, which had cut my forehead wide open!

### **It's Good For Points**

Miles and hours and momentous events later, I stopped at the aid station, where the medic cleaned and bandaged my "wound." When he was finished, he matter-of-factly handed me a form. "Fill this out," he said. "It's good for points, if nothing else!"

I read the bold print atop the form. Purple Heart, it said. I handed it back to him. "I can't fill this out," I said. "You know how I got this wound?"

So I told him, and he laughed, but then he got serious. "If you knew how many Purple Hearts are awarded for wound stupider than yours, you'd fill it out in a heartbeat!"

But there were too many of my friends who had earned their Purple Hearts with true combat wounds, so I gave him back the form. That

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night we hard-boiled the eggs in our helmet cooking pots, and stowed eggs, bread and wine in our packs. Crossing the Po in assault boats next day, and many dangerous miles by jeep and on foot to the north, we were grateful for that simple Italian food. Hot Army meals didn't catch up with us until the war was over.

*Postscript:* Weeks later, we learned through Fifth Army statisticians that Keyes' night time bazooka rounds had disabled the Tiger's caterpillar treads, effectively putting it out of action. We never knew what happened to its crew.

## Tanks Don't Make Heroes

It was a week before the war would end, but we didn't know that. The line company men who had led the attack along the highway all day were stalled somewhere ahead. We in Recon made our way up the sprawled column of jeeps, trucks and tanks in two 50-caliber-mounted jeeps, with orders to radio back to the Colonel why the attack was halted.

We were on the corniche road winding above Lake Garda, the turquoise lake below, gray limestone cliffs above, under a cloudless Italian sky. Every jeep, truck and tank in the column, including ours, was festooned with April flowers; lilacs, tulips, hyacinth, apple blossoms, thrown over our vehicles by the just-liberated people of Bardolino. Tucked into odd corners under our feet were bottles of the local wine, also contributed by the happy Bardolinese.

We had just squeezed past a Sherman tank which almost blocked the narrow road when the flat crack of a German 88 and the almost simultaneous rattling smash of a shell hitting the cliff ahead told us we'd found the problem.

Bailing out of our jeeps in a hurry, we joined a line company sergeant behind the low stone wall edging the road on the lake side. Between successive exploding shells the sergeant laid it out for us.

"My guys are pinned down around the bend, behind the wall. The Kraut gun's across the bay. No way we can move ahead without more firepower."

I looked back at the tank looming behind us. "What the hell good is that tin can if he can't take out an 88?"

The sergeant spat, and grimaced at the tank. "Yeah, I talked to the commander, a lieutenant. He claims he can't move up and engage the Krauts without radio orders from his CO. I claim he's just chicken, waiting for the war to end."

While Les got on the radio to the Colonel, Smoky and I crawled around the corner and inched ourselves high enough to stare across the bay. There in an olive grove the German cannon with its half-track towing vehicle squatted in the shade, silent for a moment, but menacing.

"Whaddya think?" Smoky asked. "Could we do any good with the 50s?" I swallowed hard. "With a lucky shot, maybe. But this wall doesn't cover you if you're sitting in a jeep."

Smoky grinned. "Yeah, but we got a windshield for armor."

Les hollered then. "The Colonel's coming up—says he wants to talk to that tank commander. Meanwhile, this damn war's goin' nowhere."

Smoky and the sergeant had crawled back to us, and were gesturing at the Germans across the bay. Another shell crashed on the cliff, just feet above the GIs lying behind the wall. The sergeant returned around the corner on his belly to check on his men. Smoky turned back to us. He was our squad's ranking non-com, a buck sergeant.

"It's this simple," he grunted. "Somebody's gonna get killed if we wait for that tanker. I vote we try with the 50s. Can't do any more than get killed ourselves."

We looked furtively at one another. Les shrugged. Henderson looked at the tank, then at us, and he shrugged. I looked at Smoky.

### *There's a War On!*

"OK, it's unanimous. Let's saddle up, there's a war on!" Smoky talked like that—he was a cowhand back home, and a horse cavalry private before he joined us.

We hustled, bent-over, back to our jeeps, though the German gunners couldn't see this far behind the bend. We stripped the flowers off the guns and gun mounts, checked that rounds were in the chambers and bullet-belts folded smoothly. Les and I started the jeeps, with Smoky and Henderson on the guns. In spite of Smoky's joke, our windshields lay flat on the hood, as they had throughout the campaign.

Les and Smoky led off with cowboy yells, Henderson and I in echelon behind them. We rounded the cliff corner, and both jeeps nosed up to the wall. As we lurched to a stop, Smoky and Henderson began firing over our heads. I remember the 88's muzzle tracking towards us, the hammering of the 50s loud in my ears, and our tracer rounds striking sparks off the gun mount and the tracked vehicle behind. There was a flash of flame, a plume of smoke, and suddenly the gun was shrouded in smoke and streaks of fire.

Smoky hollered "Keep firing!" We saw the bent figures of the German gunners running away out of the smoke, and then all along the wall the line company riflemen and machine gunners added their bullets to the hail of metal that shredded the olive grove. The 88, as it turned out, never fired again. Apparently, our bullets had ignited the Germans' fuel cans, burning both the tracked vehicle and part of the gun.

### *Move Out*

Our 50s fell silent, and one by one the line company guns did too. Along the wall, men stood up and stretched. We heard the sergeant holler "Move out" and the long caterpillar of dogfaces slogged forward toward their next encounter with the enemy.

We backed the jeeps out of the way, so the motorized column could get started again. Soon the tank, which had never fired a shot, clanked by with its turret buttoned up, as if its commander were ashamed to be seen by us foot soldiers. We later heard the Colonel had chewed him out mercilessly, but too late for him to contribute to the fire fight. We also heard the Fifth Army statisticians credited us with one destroyed 88 and its tractor. But while they were studying the burned-out gun, we were back on foot chasing an SS patrol retreating up the steep sides of Monte Baldo towards Austria.





## NEW MEMBERS

*January 1, 2017 to March 31, 2017*

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*January 1, 2017 to March 31, 2017*

*These friends of the Museum made donations separate from membership dues during the dates shown. The list includes gifts to the Annual Fund Drive and general donations. We extend our gratitude for your generous support, which is critical to our success.*

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*January 1, 2017 to March 31, 2017*

Heide Allen  
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## MEMORIAL DONATIONS

*January 1, 2017 to March 31, 2017*

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### **In Memory of David J. McPhee**

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## Hannes Schneider Meister Cup Held in Midwinter Conditions



Jamie Gemmitti

*The team from the Army Mountain Warfare School in Jericho, Vermont won the military division of the 2017 Meister Cup. From left the team members are MSG Jeffrey Guion, SFC Brett Clairmont, SSG Andrew Gelinias, SFC Duncan Domey and SSG Jay Tooley.*

The 21<sup>st</sup> annual Hannes Schneider Meister Cup was held at Cranmore Mountain Resort on March 11 in uncharacteristically brutal weather conditions with temperatures in the single digits and winds in the double digits. Due to the harsh conditions, organizers decided to move the Opening Ceremony, usually performed outside on an elevated snow stage built especially for the event, inside to the Eating House restaurant for the first time in the history of the event.

A color guard from the Army Mountain Warfare School of Jericho, Vermont posted the national and 10<sup>th</sup> Mountain Division colors to open the ceremony. Executive Councilor Jack Kenney of Wakefield and Deputy House Speaker Gene Chandler of Bartlett gave short addresses to the full house, and Ben Wilcox of Cranmore introduced Brian Fairbank, owner of the resort.

With the Opening Ceremony taking place inside, the snow stage became a large podium for the display of Jackson native Marshall Abbott's vintage 1968 Tucker Sno-Cat alongside Cranmore's new, state-of-the-art Pisten Bully 600E+ diesel-electric groomer in recognition of Cranmore's pioneering role in the invention of ski area slope grooming in the early 1940s. Cranmore's then-manager Phil Robertson described the resort's use of a tracked farm tractor to pull a variety of rollers and implements in ski publications in the 1940s, well before similar efforts at places like Winter Park, Colorado took place in the mid-1950s.

The two-run dual course race was held on the Alley, the relatively wind-protected trail that is the one-time location of the resort's iconic Skimobile lift. In the team format of the race, 5-person teams compete based on the best one run of two of all five

members. One hundred fifty seven racers finished, with the Cranmore I team taking the top spot, followed by WMWV and EMS. Tyler Haynes was the top male finisher with a time of 29:98, and Leanne Smith, two-time Olympian and Cranmore ambassador, was the fastest woman with a time of 30.38. Cranmore's main base lodge affords a prime view of the entire course, and on Saturday this was a comfortable location for spectators to follow the race protected from the elements.

At the award ceremony, Hannes and Markus Schneider, the great-grandsons of Hannes Schneider, presented trophies to the winners of the various competitive categories. Age classes ran from nine and under to 90 and over, and the winner (and only entrant) of the 90 + class, Dick Calvert of Wolfeboro, finished 138th of 157 despite recovering from a broken nose and fractured ribs.

Throughout the day bidding proceeded on some 180 items at the silent auction, featuring many attractive gifts, gift certificates, and trip certificates for skiers and riders that were contributed by valley businesses and groups. The soundtrack of the day was provided by the Bavarian Brothers Band, playing their distinctively jovial central European oompah music, but also providing a distant, haunting rendition of Taps at the Opening Ceremony.

Despite the unseasonable weather, thanks to the adaptability of the staff at Cranmore Mountain Resort, the event was held successfully, and both the base lodge and the Eating House and Zip's Pub were full.

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## People and Events of the New England Ski Museum

Jamie Gemmitti



Brian Fairbank addresses the 2017 Meister Cup Opening Ceremony, which had to be held inside due to the bitter cold conditions. Brian Fairbank is the chief of the Fairbank Group, which owns and operates Cranmore, Bromley and Jiminy Peak.



Jamie Gemmitti

The Reed Family took first place in the vintage fashion contest with this overwhelming display of authentic ski fashions, many originating in the ski shop started by Carroll Reed.

Jamie Gemmitti



Meister Cup Master of Ceremonies and WMWV disk jockey Roy Prescott takes a well-deserved break at the conclusion of the 2017 Award Ceremony.



Jamie Gemmitti

The fastest man at the 2017 Meister Cup was Tyler Haynes, here congratulated by Hannes, left, and Markus Schneider, the great-grandsons of Hannes Schneider.

Jamie Gemmitti



To no one's surprise, the fastest woman at the 2017 Meister Cup was Leanne Smith of North Conway, who grew up racing at Cranmore and recently announced her retirement from the U.S. Ski Team.



New England Ski Museum

Marshall Abbott, owner of the 1968 Tucker Sno-cat displayed on the snow stage behind him, brought his machine to the event, where it was parked next to Cranmore's Pisten Bully 600E+ diesel-electric groomer in recognition of Cranmore's role in the invention of snow grooming techniques in the 1940s.



## UPCOMING EVENTS

### Exhibit Opening Party

*Friday June 9, 2017*

New England Ski Museum

With the Presentation of the

Don A. Metivier Golden Ski Award

To the top male and female Eastern junior racers of 2017  
by the North American Snowsports Journalists Association

### Golf Tournament

*Monday September 25, 2017*

North Conway Country Club

To benefit the Eastern Slope Expansion Campaign

### Annual Meeting and Dinner

*Saturday November 4, 2017*

McLane Family Lodge, Dartmouth Skiway, Lyme, NH

With the Presentation of the

12<sup>th</sup> annual Spirit of Skiing Award

to the Caldwell Family

## CURRENT EXHIBITS

*Through June, 2018*

New England Ski Museum, Franconia Notch, NH

*Skiing in the Granite State*

Bethel Historical Society, Bethel, Maine

*The Mountains of Maine: Skiing in the Pine Tree State*

Bretton Woods Resort Base Lodge, Bretton Woods NH

*The Mountain Troops and Mountain Culture  
in Postwar America*

Intervale Scenic Vista, Route 16, Intervale NH

*Skiing in the Mount Washington Valley*

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Official Ski Museum



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