

POLARIS

MONTANA | NORTH DAKOTA | SOUTH DAKOTA | WYOMING

SPRING 2023 THIS ISSUE

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Hello Patrollers!

From the Director's Desk

I hope you all had a safe and fun filled 2022-2023 season. The backcountry season continues as I write this note and I'll encourage you to participate if you can. Just last week Red Lodge received over 4-feet of new snow.

The Division E-Board is set for April 29 at the Chico Hotsprings. If you are interested, it's an open meeting and you are welcome to attend. The format and goals are similar to last year's meeting. We will begin by discussing the past season, what went right and what can we improve upon for next season. We will also plan for Annual meeting in September, which is already set for the 15th -17th at Fairmont Hotsprings and what events will be offered in the 2023- 2024 season. If you have a concern or topic you would like to have on the agenda, please contact your regional advisor. They are Allan Rabbitt (Region 1, Western) and Ron Wiggins (Region 2, Eastern).

Division News

Powder Rendezvous (formerly Winter Tip Off) was held at Antelope Butte in January. I'd like to take a moment to thank the owners and patrollers for hosting the division. What a great venue and good people. I'm sure Mike Marlow will have a lot more to say in his article. The division also offered a Senior this season with an OEC/OET clinic at Maverick outside of Dillon. Another great venue and I'll say the host patrol was marvelous. The Senior evaluation was held at Red Lodge, the weather could not have been better and the mountain facilities were more than adequate. I'm sure Mike Marlow will speak more about that also.

Additionally, Steve Porcella and his expert gang of avalanche instructors pulled off an excellent



Avalanche Level II clinic at Lost Trail Ski Area. I've heard a lot of high praises about the level of information and instruction. If you have not heard, you need to ask Allan Rabbitt about his truck load of dummies. Look for more details in Steve's article.

Ho! I can't forget to mention the Women's Fest held the first weekend in March at Showdown. I wasn't there but heard that it was another amazing weekend. Fresh snow, lots of comradery and many participants. Check out Colleen and Bridget's article for more details. If you missed it this season you better plan to attend next year.

The Division continues to be strong financially and as a result I am **NOT** proposing any dues increase for the coming 2023-2024 season.

National News

Stephanie Cox, our new National Executive Director is working with returning Board Chair Rick Boyce on several initiatives. Stephanie and her growing staff are doing a great job of outreach to our existing sponsors and adding new partners monthly. Please keep an eye on the Sweeps e-blasts for the latest news from the National office.

For specifics the Board and the four standing committees of Finance, Governance, Education and Planning are working through several items. Note, the listing below is by no means all inclusive. These are just the highlights that I captured during recent meetings with the Division Director group and the National Board.

National Board Project List:

Code of Conduct. There is a small Board subcommittee doing some clean up work on the existing Code of Conduct. Look for a revised edition being approved sometime this summer by the Board.

Request for Action (RFA). Hosts to Traditional. This is a revised version of the Bylaw change that was before membership during last falls election. I believe it was defeated because we, myself included, did not do an adequate job of educating our members. Hosts currently pay the exact same dues that regular patrollers pay but they do not have voting privileges/responsibilities. I support this RFA and will be sending out further information before elections this fall.

Request for Action (RFA). Board Restructure. This is a new RFA and proposes to restructure the Board make up such that each Division is represented by a voting member and bring in members from outside NSP such as from our sponsors and/or our area partners. At the moment, as you can imagine, there is some resistance from current Board members and I'll guess amendments or changes to the RFA structure will be offered and discussed. This RFA will need to be on the fall election ballot. Stay tuned as I'll be giving progress updates in the future.

Review and possible updates to both the Bylaws and Policies & Procedures. The National Board and various standing committees will be reviewing both documents in an effort to simplify the operations of running the organization. This effort was initiated last year and is ongoing.

These are just highlights of what's going on at the National level from my notes. If you have a question on a topic not specifically mentioned or one you feel should be addressed, please reach out to me.

Karl Uhlig

Division Director
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Spring Cleaning

As I put away my Patrol vest, gear, and skis for the season, I have a choice. I could just dump the whole pile of stuff in the corner of my garage and not worry about it until next winter. This is very tempting and something I have undoubtedly done numerous times in past years. OR I can take care of my gear that has taken care of me all season. I can clean it, wax it, and neatly put it away. This is the gear I will depend on for years to come, so it is worth a bit of time to treat it well.



The same can be said for our fellow patrollers. Now that the season has ended, we can forget about them and move on to all things Spring and Summer. We can easily put them in the back corner until we need them again come refresher time next fall. Or we can invest some time to recognize the people that have taken care of us; those patrollers that do more than asked, those who teach to make us all better, those who work hard and never complain, those who make us laugh and make our patrol a fun and inviting group to be a part of. Now is the perfect time to fill out some nomination forms to recognize those patrollers who make us want to come back year after year.

Here are a few great ways to show recognition:

Patrol level Awards – Most patrols have multiple awards they give out annually. These can be some of the most meaningful and memorable awards – from the “Best Wreck” to the “Best Patroller”.

Outstanding Awards highlight the best Patrol and Patrollers at the Division and National level. Outstanding nomination categories cover a multitude of sizes and shapes, to fit just about everyone deserving. The due date for these awards is April 15th.

National Level Awards – There are many National Level awards, here is a list of the key awards:

1. Hall of Fame and Minnie Dole Awards – Due May 1st
2. Merit Stars – Purple, Green, Blue, and Yellow – Due June 15th
3. National Appointments – Due June 15th
4. Patroller Cross – Due June 15th
5. Distinguished Service Award or Meritorious Service Award – Due June 15 th

Northern Division Awards – the Northern Division had 4 different awards: Mark Behan Outstanding Instructor Award, Warren Bowman Outstanding OEC Instructor Award, Dwight Chambers Rising Star Award and the Northern Division Patriot Star Award These forms can be found on the Northern Division website. These are due by July 15th.

As the Northern Division Awards Advisor, I am here to help with any and all parts of the Awards process! Colleen Finch – finchski200@gmail.com or 406-781-9690

Mark your calendars for the Northern Division Awards Banquet.

Saturday, September 16th at Fairmont Hot Springs.

Colleen Finch

Northern Division Interim Women's Directors
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I COME SEEKING INFORMATION

Hope everyone is having a great Spring. We still have 2' of snow in our front yard and a couple more inches this morning.

I am on a seek (and not destroy) mission. There is a wealth of history within the Northern Division membership. The problem is that there is NO place to access that information. This became very apparent to me while working on Hall of Fame nominations for Mark Behan and Chuck Kempner. Only a bare minimum of information is available at the National office and that usually consists of a copy of a patroller's profile.

The Polaris generally contains a list of Division wide jobs and personnel filling those jobs and that is very helpful, HOWEVER there is a large hole in that body of information.

When I "inherited" a wealth of history from Stan King, there were a number of the old Polaris'. I have a copy of the first Polaris published, November 24, 1966, and several more through the 1970s, 80s and 90s. The last printed Polaris I have is April 1999. The next one I have is the digital version Fall 2015. Pretty simple math - we have a 16 year void for Northern Division information.

Herein is my SEEKING. If anyone has copies of any Polaris' during this 16 year period and would be willing to loan them to me, I could scan them and print a hard copy. I realize this is going to apply to our more "senior" patrollers but any help would be greatly appreciated.

I am printing hard copies of all the digital versions of the Polaris. I am fairly certain that the printed copy will never crash.

Thanks in advance for any help you can lend.

Steve Thompson

Division Historian

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Don't Be SAD with Patroller Health

Happy Spring from North Dakota!

Hopefully by the time this is published the weather is warming and the flowers are trying to bloom and you are suffering from seasonal Allergies! Beautiful times! Yes, as always, we must take the good with the sometimes difficult side effects.

This year we were blessed with almost record snowfall in North Dakota giving Huff Hills one of the longest ski seasons in a very long time. In fact might be the longest season but this report had a deadline so we are not sure yet. With that "blessing" came a ton of snow blowing, shoveling, closed roads, backaches and winter blues. It is only fun for so long and then it becomes a chore. (Pain in the arse)

Winter Blues or officially called, (Seasonal Affective Disorder) (SAD) A type of mood disorder associated with seasonal changes, is commonly seen as depression arising during the winter months. It happens due to a disturbance in the circadian system of the body. Wait, patrollers have "Skiing and Patrolling" why would we be SAD? While SAD generally goes away as soon as you have to start mowing the lawn, it can last! In fact it can last for months or even years if not managed. It also can manifest into the bigger mental health issues of Patroller / Compassion fatigue! Yep it is real! Compassion Fatigue can and does affect patrollers/providers who are exposed to other people's trauma. It is also known as secondary or vicarious trauma; patrollers can experience acute symptoms that put the physical and mental health of patrollers at risk, making them cautious of giving and caring hence leading to burnout, apathy and then quitting.

It is not just the winter blues (SAD) sometimes. Those who regularly experience indirect trauma often neglect their own self-care and personal life as they struggle with images and stories that can't be forgotten. Symptoms of compassion fatigue

can include exhaustion, disrupted sleep, anxiety, headaches, stomach upset, irritability, and numbness, and we are then prone to substance abuse, decreased sense of purpose, emotional disconnection, self-contempt, and difficulties with personal relationships. Yep, then there are some winter blues!

I believe each patrol and every patroller's reasonability is to help each other by just paying attention. It is not just a major event that triggers (SAD) we all take a part in watching our fellow patrollers, the events on our patrol areas, we need to be aware of who may be suffering. However, each of you as a patroller must first look at yourself! If you feel frustrated step back and reflect. Be Grateful for the good you have and that you do! Be healthy and take care of your physical, mental and emotional health, Stay Connected with your team, Be Flexible with rolling with the changes that life brings. Set your boundaries and honor your needs and be honest with yourself and get professional help if need. I repeat, to help others we need to be on solid ground ourselves first.

We as providers are all in this together. Patrollers must keep our Mental, Physical, and Spiritual Health in the forefront of our training and be forthright with our candidates' as well as coworkers with the downside to this great privilege of Ski Patrolling. Patroller physical, mental or emotional Health should not be compromised any more than Scene Safety. Situational awareness needs to be part of training from top to bottom of NSP. Pay attention to your team and don't be SAD, Be Happy!

Happy Spring Everyone.

Dan Schaefer
Assistant Division Director
Huff Hills Ski Patrol



Alumni patrollers and family attended the national alumni event this year, held February 26 to March 4, 2023, at the Grouse Mountain Lodge one mile west of Whitefish, with world-class skiing at Whitefish Mountain. Tim Viall, NSP alumni advisor, was our host and organizer. Several alumni advisors attended: Jim Margolis, Far West Division; Bruce Amrine, Northern Division ; Tom Raudorf, Southern Division and Mark and Patti Giebel, Southern California Region. Other alumni and family added another 40+ friendly folks to the celebration.

At our first dinner, we shared our experiences: 22 alumni reported serving 770 years with NSP; 35 years on average. One alumnus has had 60 years with NSP!

In addition to eating, drinking and socializing, there were several other activities: cross country skiing, dog sled rides and horse-drawn sleigh rides, beer sampling, and a visit to Glacier Park which included lunch at the historic Isaac Walton Inn, an old Great Northern Railway hotel on the south edge of the park. We also did lots of hot tubbing to relieve our aches and pains!

Discussion of events for 2024: Whitefish and Grouse Mountain Lodge will give us the same double rooms in a lovely lodge and ski passes for a low \$30 for seniors 70-up (Plus Glacier Park and Yellowstone Park options). We are preparing for February 25 - March 3, 2024.

I also wanted to take a moment to **Thank** everyone for their effort in keeping track of retiring and patrollers who are leaving. Due to your efforts, we have added a few more alumni members and not lost years of **valuable** experience!!

HELP: Trying to locate the following:

Sam Miller, 171451: Rebin Retchless, 150094:
Larry Steffensmeier, 128341

Have a Great Summer, Be Safe !!

Bruce Amrine

OET/SENIOR/ETC NOTES

OET Update:

As I predicated last year, Region 2 is rising up! We held Powder Rendezvous at Antelope Butte, had over 50 participants, OET Instructors 6 National OET Supervisors (from Alaska, Far West, Intermountain, Northern, Pacific Northwest) and 6 NRM PSIA Clinicians. We held the annual Toboggan Rodeo with the winning team running the course in under 5 minutes and the "skunked" (losing team coming it at over 27 minutes.

We continue to grow our Instructor ranks with several new instructors signed off and helping sign off several dozen new patrollers on the OET side of things.

On a National note, the National OET Team Continues to work on video storyboards for training in the LMS system, so that patrollers can review different OET skills.

We are looking forward to having a Powder Rendezvous (location yet to be determined), as well as possibly another Senior Clinic (2nd weekend February) and Senior Final (3rd weekend in March).

Dates and locations of on-hill events will be announced at the fall division meeting, as well as registration information.

Have a great summer and as always, let me know if you have questions, concerns, or different ideas for the OET program. I'm here to listen!

See you on the Snow!

See you on the Snow!

Mike Marlow

Northern OET Supervisor
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Senior Update:

Hats off to Maverick Ski Patrol and Area and Red Lodge Ski Patrol and Resort for helping the Northern Division pull off the 2023 Senior Clinic and Evaluation! All the help the respective patrols and areas, and the help within the Northern Division is MUCH appreciated. AS John and I know ... Herding Cats is REAL!

We had 6 patrollers that passed the Senior evaluation were Stephen Begley (Great Divide), Toni Ilgen (Antelope Butte), Tiare Ilgen (Antelope Butte), Ryan Gregory (Antelope Butte), Seth Larson (Red Lodge), Paul Plourde (Antelope Butte). I TOLD YOU REGION TWO WAS RISING AGAIN!

Want to join the Senior Ranks? Reach out to your patrol rep!

Want to help with Senior in the future? Please reach out!

Until next time!

Mike Marlow

Northern OET Supervisor
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Nordic/BackCountry Spring 2023

Flathead Nordic BackCountry Patrol, the only N/BC patrol in the Northern Division, has had a good year. An OEC course held in conjunction with Blacktail Mtn., and with assistance from Whitefish Mountain Resort Patrol, graduated 10 students. This had been a long time coming. In Dec. the FNBP held a successful fundraiser, 2 nights of the Banff Mountain Film Festival. Proceeds being used for patroller education and community outreach. The outreach has largely been through “hot dog daze” an avalanche awareness session, once a month, at the top of the Flower Point lift at WMR. It’s a chance to talk avalanche and backcountry safety to the general public at a spot where people often venture beyond resort boundaries. Beacons are buried and searches conducted. Prizes (grilled dogs) are given out, along with schwag from the local avalanche center. There is also a beacon checkers set up at this location that people are informed about. FNBP installs and maintains 6-8 beacon checkers at trailheads throughout the Flathead National Forest, targeted at both skiers and snowmobilers. Education has been covered by NSP courses and refreshers, as well as helping patrollers with continueing education such as pro-level avalanche

courses, ISSW, Ski Trauma Clinic, snow and avalanche workshops etc. Several FNBP members are also involved with the local SAR community.

At the national level, the N/BC program has recognized at least 2 new “Nordic Masters”, analogous to the certified recognition. The N/BC program is also working on workshop/clinics to be held at the next Powderfall event in April 2024.

Remember, just because lifts quit spinning doesn’t mean ski season is over. That was just training for the spring/summer ski season, when snowpack generally improves and bigger objectives can be reached by human power. Everyone should enjoy a day of skiing in the sun followed by a swim in the lake, any lake. Its been a long winter, skiing out the back door has been excellent, I’ve had snow on the ground at home for 5 months now, and I saw my first bluebirds the other day.

Dan'l Moore
Nordic/Backcountry Supervisor



Kathleen Jennings-Mills

Kathleen Jennings Mills left us way too young on November 5th, 2022 at age 66. She began her career as National Ski Patrol volunteer in 1981 at Taylor Mountain, Idaho and then transferred to Snow King, Wyoming after Taylor Mountain closed.

She and her husband Bill patrolled as a team at many areas across the US following their careers as engineers supporting the US Nuclear Navy. They continued to patrol at Seven Springs, PA, White Pass, WA, and Lost Trail Ski Area on the Idaho/ Montana state line.

She became well known at Snow King with a variety of talents. She received the Julia Child Award for "Best Brownies" along with several more serious awards. She received her Basic Avalanche certification in 1982, Basic Mountaineering in 1983 and "Senior" patrol status at Snow King in 1987. She received her National number 8480 and Instructor Development in 1994. She became a ski and toboggan instructor in 1994, then a WEC instructor (now called OEC) in 1999. Throughout her Ski Patrol career she was an active instructor and Senior examiner.

Kathleen received the Lost Trail Ski Patrol "sleepy Eye Award" for driving over 450 miles one way to fulfill her ski patrol duty days when she lived in Tri-Cities, WA while her husband was fulfilling his duties at other areas.

Along with all their travels, Bill and Kathleen built their dream retirement home in Darby, MT. Sadly, Kathleen became ill before that dream was achieved. She continued to work in the Nuclear field in Washington until she was no longer able to work, losing her battle with Alzheimer's.

Kathleen was a 1978 graduate of Texas A&M in Nuclear Engineering. She and Bill travelled to Texas over the years to present several scholarships to engineering students.

On Kathleen's fun side, she was an avid Star Trek Fan, she enjoyed riding her mule, Roper, fishing in the high mountain lakes of Montana and Idaho, and attending many hockey games in the Tri-City Rink.

Kathleen is survived by her loving husband, Bill Mills (National # 6007), Son Charles Mills and numerous friends and Ski Patrol family.

Marie and Norm Ando

Lost Trail Ski Patrol, Idaho/Montana

“Empowered Women Empower Women”

UNKNOWN

One of the themes that arose during our 3rd annual Great Falls Ski Patrol Women’s Event was that of shared female voices, of having more women at the table. There is a power and energy that comes when we get together for a common purpose.

Very few ski areas are female-owned and run; we are fortunate that Showdown is one of those rare gems. Katie Boedecker and her team are exceptional and are doing a remarkable job of bringing women’s voices to the table. It is pretty special to host a women’s event at Showdown with the support of this team.

Our group this year included 14 women from across the Northern Division (from Bismarck, North Dakota to Missoula, Montana). Our participants included women from: Huff Hills, Antelope Butte, North Absaroka, Great Falls, Great Divide, and Snowbowl. These fabulous women brought a range of experience and a plethora of wisdom. It was a joy to share ideas, tips, and especially laughter.

Friday was all about tobogganing, with a Toboggan Enhancement Seminar. We worked on body position, tail roping, and route selection, sharing tips for what works best for us. It is always a sign that things are going well when the participants ask to go again...and again...and again. We concluded the day at Top Rock with après snacks and a resiliency training graciously led by Christine Lustik (Snowbowl). Christine reminded us to take care of ourselves and to find joy and delight in every moment. Human slalom down the Hall-O at the end of the day was the perfect way to embrace that joy.

We picked right back up on Saturday, starting with stretching on the helipad and sharing thoughts from the day before. Participants took part in sessions: PSIA clinic and mountaineering. Kayla Lyons (PSIA, Bridger Bowl) lead a ski skills clinic filled with learning and laughter. Jenney Paddock and Mark Paddock (GFSP) lead a mountaineering class, taking a side-country tour with multiple stops to discuss off-area rescues and one stop to warm up at a fire and have a snack. As on Friday, the energy was infectiously upbeat and positive.

I love this event for many reasons. I love learning and I love sharing. There is a power in so many great women coming together and I always learn something new from each and every one of them. I also love how supportive everyone is and the support we have for this event. Thank you to everyone who helps to make this event successful. And, again, thank you to Showdown. You are part of why this event is so much fun and so successful.

Thank you and see you next year!

Bridgett Paddock & Colleen Finch
Northern Division Women’s Advisors



In addition to Vail, former members of the 10th Division founded or were affiliated with some 60-odd ski resorts across the US, including Stratton, Whiteface and Aspen. This helped create a post-war ski boom that opened the previously elite sport to a broader demographic, as the division's alumni created ski schools and educational programming throughout the country.

BBC

<https://www.bbc.com/travel/article/20230105-the-us-ski-resorts-built-by-ww2-soldiers>

January 6, 2023

THE US SKI RESORTS BUILT BY WW2 SOLDIERS

After fighting Hitler's men in Europe, an elite division of mountain fighters returned to the US to popularise skiing across the country.

By Caroline Eubanks



(Image credit: Cavan Images/Getty Images)

Located 100 miles west of Denver, the Colorado ski town of Vail is set in a bowl-like valley beneath the surrounding mountains, with cobblestone streets and overflowing flower boxes that wouldn't look out of place in an Alpine village. Today, the town's slopes attract hundreds of thousands of skiers every year to what many consider to be the US' quintessential ski resort. But few know that were it not for veterans of a World War Two mountain warfare division, this town – and many others like it across the country – may never have existed.

It all started with a meeting in a Vermont ski lodge. In 1938, Charles Minot "Minnie" Dole founded the National Ski Patrol (NSP) to provide emergency rescue and medical care on remote slopes. The following year, Dole watched as outnumbered Finnish troops on skis humiliated the Soviet army in eastern Finland during the so-called Winter War at the onset of WW2. Fearing that the Nazis (who already had three mountain combat units) may invade the snowy Northeastern US through Canada, Dole lobbied the US War Department to create a unit equipped to fight in harsh, wintry terrain. In 1943, the US Army established

the 10th Mountain Division: the US' only combat unit dedicated to alpine warfare.

The War Department recruited the NSP to help train the new unit. In addition to recruiting professional mountaineers and skiers from the NSP's ranks, the division attracted non-traditional soldiers, including champion skiers from New England colleges and ex-athletes with no ski experience who took up the fight against the Nazis.



The 10th Mountain Division was created by the US War Department to help prevent a Nazi invasion and trained outside Vail (Credit: Vail Resorts)

The division soon moved to a new training facility called Camp Hale, located 40 miles south of what is now Vail. The camp was perched close to 9,000ft above sea level on rocky terrain that would prepare the nearly 19,000 soldiers for any potential battles ahead. According to McKay Jenkins, author of *The Last Ridge: The Epic Story of America's First Mountain Soldiers and the Assault on Hitler's Europe*, soldiers practiced downhill ski runs, spent hours cross-country skiing and embarked on multi-day hikes through the high-altitude setting as part of their training.

The Nazi invasion on US soil never came, but as the war continued, the 10th Division travelled to Italy's steep Apennine Mountains in 1945, where soldiers used their training to combat Germans stationed atop the jagged

peaks. Each soldier wore a white camouflage suit and carried a 45- to 55-pound pack filled with provisions, attaching their skis to their packs when not in use. The Germans' mountaintop, sniper-armed fortifications gave them a clear advantage, but the 10th Division scouted five routes up the mountain, with each company taking a different trail.

While the 10th Division expected to see 90% losses, not a single man died during the nearly vertical climb up Riva Ridge, a steep incline overlooking Mount Belvedere. Thanks to their training, the troops were able to glide up the snow and ice on skis in the middle of the night, taking the Germans by surprise and pushing them back with support from riflemen who accompanied them up the ridge, following their unofficial motto of "sempre avanti" (always forward).

The Battle of Riva Ridge helped take the US take the important Axis encampment near Mount Belvedere. But as the Germans carried out a counterattack after US soldiers skied and climbed up the mountain, 213 American soldiers were killed and another 782 wounded from the 10th Division and the supporting infantry divisions. By the end of the war, the 10th Mountain Division suffered one of the worst losses of any group, losing nearly 1,000 of its nearly 19,000 soldiers. Yet, their overall impact in WW2 was significant.



The unit played a very important role in a battle against Nazi forces in Italy (Credit: Vail Resorts)

"It actually opened up the Italian Campaign [the Allied plan to break up the Axis troops in the Apennine Mountains] to push through and end the war that much quicker," said Jeff Wiles, the guest services manager at Vail Resort.

Following the end of the war a few months after the battle, many of the division's veterans settled back in the US' few ski towns. Among them was Pete Seibert, who joined the unit in 1943 as an 18-year-old. He was wounded in the war

and was told he wouldn't walk again, but went on to place third in a national slalom competition.

In 1957, while Seibert was working at Loveland Ski Resort, located between Vail and Denver, a friend took him on a hike along what seemed like the perfect ski slope. Seibert's visit sparked an idea, and he soon met with people to buy up land and turn it into a resort in 1960. They called it Vail.

"[The few] other ski towns [had an existing infrastructure], like Aspen, Crested Butte, Telluride. They were mining towns that then became ski mountains," said Mason. "[In Vail], there was not even a single road, not a single street. There was nothing. So, it's pretty incredible what he built."



Seibert and other 10th Division alumni founded more than 60 ski resorts across the US (Credit: Vail Resorts)

Seibert was in good company in the newly formed resort town. After earning a Purple Heart (one of the US' highest military honours) in Italy, fellow 10th Division soldier William R "Sarge" Brown joined the burgeoning team, installing Vail's first snowmaking equipment in 1970.

"Every other person that you met, some guy that owned a ski shop, the bar, everybody. Everybody was a 10th Mountain guy back in the day, especially in Vail, because there they could get in on the ground because [the resort] was so new," said Jennifer Mason, executive director of the Colorado Snowsports Museum, which has exhibits on the 10th Mountain Division and Vail's history.

In fact, one of the most enduring legacies of the division's veterans is how they helped popularise skiing in the US. In addition to Vail, former members of the 10th Division founded or were affiliated with some 60-odd ski resorts across the US, including Stratton, Whiteface and Aspen. This helped create a post-war ski boom that opened the previously elite sport to a broader demographic, as the division's alumni created ski schools and educational programming throughout the country. Clif Taylor, another 10th Division veteran wounded at Riva Ridge, designed shorter skis that made it easier for beginners to learn

the sport, and soon Army surplus stores were selling thousands of pairs of skis at lower prices than their competitors.

The division's other alumni also founded outdoor gear brands like Gore-Tex, Vibram and Outdoor Research, creating backpacks, tents and other gear based on their cold-weather experiences in Italy. Another, Bill Bowerman, co-founded Nike. These men also summited K2; gave other brands feedback to develop more lightweight skis; and founded the National Outdoor Leadership School, a global wilderness organisation. In 1985, the division was reinstated at Fort Drum in New York, and served in Afghanistan, but its "home" is still in the hills surrounding Vail.



Today, Vail continues to honour its WW2 past with Legacy Weekends, statues and runs named after the division (Credit: Vail Resorts)

Today, Vail is now arguably the US' most famous ski resort, and Seibert remained at the helm of it until 1977. But the connection with the 10th Mountain Division continues to this day, with the resort celebrating its 60th anniversary in December 2022. A statue of a soldier in the division's trademark white camouflage was dedicated in Vail Village in 1997, and a whiskey distillery in the town was named in honour of the division in 2016.

On the slopes, runs like Riva Ridge and Minnie's Mile are nods to the unit. The 10th restaurant, located halfway up the mountain, honours the soldiers via a series of informational panels with QR codes that educate skiers on Vail's WW2 connections. The resort also has a Legacy Weekend every February, which is centred around the anniversary of the Battle of Riva Ridge, with the landing of a Black Hawk helicopter and a torch-lit ski parade. The parades continue seasonally through the Friday Legacy Days, when skiers don white jumpsuits like the men of the 10th Mountain Division wore in Italy, as well as World War Two-era skis, replica rifles and helmets.

Division veteran Fritz Benedict also created the 10th Mountain Hut Association, a series of backcountry huts for hikers, skiers and snowshoers to stay in, built with funds donated by veterans and in memorial of those killed in action, inspired by the ones found in the Alps.

"Those huts are very much emulated from the huts that are all over Europe. There's about 13 of them and you could essentially ski from Vail to Aspen, and stay in a hut every night," said Mason.



Skiing may never have become as popular in the US as it is today were it not for these WW2 soldiers (Credit: Patrick Orton/Getty Images)

Five of the huts are within the recently formed Camp Hale National Monument, where the soldiers trained. The site is made up of 53,804 acres, including what remains of the bunkers where soldiers slept during training. Visitors can explore more than 80 miles of hiking trails and take part in backcountry skiing and camping; and a granite monolith at Tennessee Pass above the camp bears the names of the division's fallen soldiers.

Today, skiers of all experience levels soar to the top of Vail Mountain in gondolas and shoot down slopes named for the people and places that birthed this resort. But were it not for the skills learned in a nearby camp and a dangerous, dark climb up a distant peak into Nazi territory, skiing may never have become as popular in the US as it is today.

...

AVY 2 CLASS



Greetings everyone!

The triple dip La Nina has been very impressive this winter, with near record snow and moisture in California and across the west. In addition, a delayed spring will be likely because of the colder than average northern hemisphere Pacific waters brought about by this impressive La Nina winter. Many resorts and ski areas throughout the west are extending their seasons by a month or well into summer. Let's hope this 2022-2023 record La Nina makes a big, positive difference in many of the drought-impacted reservoirs, lakes and rivers of our recreation-driven western states and communities!

The Northern Division Avalanche program was hard at work this year with the Avalanche Level 2 course taught at Lost Trail, MT/ID (Feb 11-12), the Avalanche Level 1 course taught at Antelope Butte, WY (March 18-19), and the Avalanche Fundamentals course taught at Showdown, MT (Great Falls Ski Patrol) (March 4th).

The Lost Trail Level 2 class was a large course because this is the first time since the pandemic that the Level 2 was taught within the Northern Division. Twenty one students passed the course and represented the following Patrols/areas; Snowbowl, Lost Trail, Antelope Butte, and Showdown (Great Falls). In all, more than 40 individuals, which included instructors and instructor-helpers, participated from across three states, and six different ski areas, all within the Northern Division. A big thanks to Steve Thompson, Allan Rabbitt and Dan'l Moore who came down and served as helpers, educators and evaluators for the course. Many thanks to all of our instructors and instructor helpers and most importantly a big thanks to Lost Trail Ski Resort for their continued support of NSP avalanche education courses.

Marcus Dufort led a high quality Avalanche Level 1 course at Antelope Butte that combined NSP Avalanche Instructors and experts from the Far West Division with Northern Division Avalanche instructors for the online Zoom lectures. Fourteen Students from varying backgrounds and from the Northern Division received a great opportunity to hear and listen about the incredible snow year at many of the biggest resorts in California as well as within their own Northern Division. Four ski patrollers from Casper Mountain and two from Antelope Butte passed the course with up-to-date knowledge about avalanches and snow science. In all, eighteen individuals participated in the two field days and upwards of 40-50 participated in the online Zoom lectures. A big thank you to all the instructors and instructor helpers involved in the course and to Antelope Butte for hosting a very well-run and high quality NSP Avalanche Level 1 class.

Allan Rabbitt, our Region 1 Director hosted an Avalanche Fundamentals course at Showdown. Many thanks to Allan and Great Falls Patrol Avalanche instructors and a big thank you to Showdown for their continued support of NSP avalanche education.

Well, I think most of us are ready for a new universe of sun, biking, hiking, golf, rafting, climbing and whatever else you have been waiting for! Many thank yous to all and may all of you have a great rest of your season and an awesome Spring, Summer and Fall!

From the Steep and Deep

Your Northern Division Avalanche Supervisor

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Calendar of Events

DATE	EVENT	LOCATION
April 28-29, 2023	Northern Division eBoard Meeting	Chico Hot Springs
June 9,10,11 2023	Nuts & Bolts (OET Training)	Mt Hood – Timberline
Sept 15, 16, 17, 2023	Northern Division Annual Meeting	Fairmont Hot Springs
Jan 19, 20, 21 2024	Powder Rendezvous!	TBD
April 10-14, 2024	Powderfall 2024	Vail,CO