



**"We Climb To Conquer" Is  
 Motto Of Army Alpine Unit**  
 Tricks Of Living And Fighting Studied The Hard Way  
 At Camp Hale, Colorado

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 By CORPORAL H. N. OLIPHANT

Camp Hale, Col.—"We climb to conquer." only by carefully trained specialists.

That's the motto of our newest unit of fighting specialists, the skiing, mule-cussing, cliff-scaling mountain troops, the first unit of its kind to be activated in the United States Army.

Here at Camp Hale, in a snow-glutted valley almost two miles above sea level, on the jagged scarp and towering white peaks of the Rocky Mountains, they're mastering the tricks and skills of mountain warfare.

Lashed together by belaying ropes, with full packs and rifles, they clamber over rock summits as scouts and observers.

Dressed in G. I. white parkas, with rucksacks and rifles, they ski at mile-a-minute speed over snow-packed slopes on reconnaissance missions.

They learn the hard way to live and fight in extreme cold, to sleep through sub-zero nights in sleeping bags under white one-piece pup tents pitched in snow.

They learn to lick old General Winter, a vital chore the Nazis, to their mortification, never quite got around to doing.

They set up artillery pieces and fire them from peaks.

When the going gets too tough for men and mules, by the use of cables and aerial tramways, they throw men, mules and equipment over abysses 100 feet wide and 1,000 feet deep.

Training for mountain warfare, to be effective, requires an inhospitably rugged terrain, varied enough to include all types of the world's roughest country. These high-altitude G.I.s at Camp Hale are in the right spot.

As a matter of fact, Camp Hale is a perfect training area for soldier-mountaineers, with every type of mountainous terrain, ranging from ice-coated escarpments to snow-filled passes.

It offers, significantly, topographical problems similar to those in Norway, the Balkans and southern France, all potential Allied invasion points.

It also offers weather conditions of sufficiently varied severity. Case-hardened soldiers in these frozen parts consider 25 degrees below zero a "moderate" temperature.

As a private from New Hampshire puts it, "It's the only outfit in this man's army where a hot-foot is both practicable and agreeable."

**Job For Experts**  
 In the last days of April, 1941, when the British were overwhelmed at Thermopylae by specially schooled and equipped Nazi mountain troops, it became clear that mountain fighting could never again be left to conventional troops. It was a job for experts. Our staff got busy.

Under the command of Brig. Gen. Onslow S. Rolfe, a regiment of expert skiers and mountaineers was sent to Fort Lewis, Wash. There on the near-by slopes of Mount Rainier, in the sharp cold of an altitude of 5,000 feet, the boys rolled down their sleeves, so to speak, and went to work.

General Rolfe is a tough-minded West Pointer who can be as stubborn as any of his mountain mules when he sets out to accomplish something. Two decorations in the first World War testified to his ability as a soldier. Now he was ready to graft his knowledge of plain soldiering onto the skills of skiing and mountaineering.

**Learn Fundamentals**  
 Meanwhile, his men were learning the fundamentals of mountain warfare: how to fight when on skis, when handling mules, when climbing mountains.

Three things determine the effective striking power of a mountain army:

Skilled, resourceful skiers and mountaineers.

Superior arms and necessary equipment to cope with extreme conditions.

Engineering training.

We're tops in all three departments.

Take the skiers and mountaineers. There are so many champs around here that roll calls sound like the rosters of ten Olympic teams.

**Prager A Sergeant**  
 There's acting top kick Walter Prager, the only skier ever to win Europe's Gold Kandahar race twice. He also coached several champion ski teams at Dartmouth. There's Sergt. Peter Gabriel, one of the world's top-flight skiers, a former Swiss mountaineer guide who has climbed most of the world's toughest peaks, from the Alps to Alaska.

There's Private Torger Tokle, world's champion jumper. And Sergt. Olaf Rodgaard, former head of the Mount Hood Ski School.

In the matter of arms and equipment, the Nazis will learn of that the hard way.

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**IN THE ROCKIES**—On snowy Colorado peaks, the United States Army's new skiing, cliff-scaling troops are mastering all the tricks of mountain warfare. Upper left, under stormy clouds, men of a pack artillery unit, laden with disassembled 75-mm. howitzers, march through a defile. Upper right, pausing on his way up the side of an ice-covered crevasse, Corporal James A. Harris, of Seminole, Okla., digs in before the last swing over the crest. Below, a gun crew has set up a 77-mm. howitzer on a ridge and is ready for practice fire. (Pictures reproduced by special permission of Yank, the army weekly.)