

22 December 1943

Dear John,

I have received your letter of December 21, just four days after I had returned from a trip overseas, during which time I visited the Fifth Army in Italy. From my own personal experiences while on a visit to the front, I can vouch for the rough going these troops have in the mountains of this region. They certainly cannot be classified as hills in any sense of the word.

I do not know exactly what the plans for the 87th Infantry Regiment or the 10th Infantry Division (Light) may be. I can say that the Commanding General of the Fifth Army and the people who are charged with the responsibility for the conduct of operations are well aware of the qualifications of these units for use in special terrain.

As you will realize, we must balance our resources very carefully, particularly in dealing with these specially trained units and if they are not committed in the Italian show, it will be because they are to be utilized in some other assignment where the need is more urgent.

Sincerely,

(SIGNED) JOHN J. McCLOY
 John J. McCloy

Mr. John E. P. Morgan
 National Ski Association of America
 415 Lexington Avenue
 New York, N. Y.

OASW:HAG:maw

Authority NND 740062
 By [Signature] NARA Date 4-16-96

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22 Dec 43

NATIONAL SKI ASSOCIATION OF AMERICA

THE NATIONAL SKI PATROL SYSTEM

CONSULTANT TO THE WAR DEPARTMENT
ON MOUNTAIN AND WINTER WARFARE
AND FOR THE SELECTION OF
SPECIALIZED PERSONNEL FOR MOUNTAIN TROOPS

415 LEXINGTON AVE.
NEW YORK, N. Y.

CHARLES M. DOLE
Chairman

JOHN E. P. MORGAN
Treasurer

STEPHEN HURLBUT
Director of
Personnel Selection

December 21, 1943



Mr. John J. McCloy
Assistant Secretary of War
War Department
Pentagon Building
Washington, D. C.

Dear Jack:

As you know, the National Ski Association has always had and continues to have a great interest in the Mountain Troops - now the 10th Infantry Division (Light). We followed with curiosity the trip of the 87th Infantry Regiment to Kiska, where they had all the mental training of the landing operation and going into combat but with no enemy to fight other than the fog.

We have also noted that the Fifth Army in Italy has found some rather rough going in the mountains (even with the help of the "grasshoppers"). Though the Army has certain prejudices against special training or the use of specialized troops, we wonder whether the 87th Infantry, due to the experience which it has had, could not be most useful in the War Theatre where really rough country is now being encountered. They have returned to this country from Kiska and are now stationed at Camp Carson, Colorado, and could probably be ready to go in a month or two.

The use of the 87th in this way might prove or disprove the value of specially trained Mountain Troops. In writing this letter I appreciate, of course, that the Joint Chiefs of Staff may have other plans for the Mountain Troops, but it could do no harm to know their possible usefulness and thereby to determine the further development of the 10th Infantry Division.

As you know, our interest is and can only be toward bringing the end of the war nearer.

Sincerely yours

John E. P. Morgan

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By *DB* NARA Date 4-16-76

COPY

June 16, 1943

Lieutenant General Lesley McNair
War Department
Washington, D. C.

My dear General -

We would like to thank you for the interest and patience with which you listened to our views on the mountain troops situation.

We also wish to record our appreciation of the open minded attitude shown by Colonel Gaither in the many discussions which we have had with him. He has been ready to listen to our suggestions and complaints at all times and we believe he has used every effort in his power to make use of those suggestions which seemed to him to be sound and which did not run counter to Army policies.

In the expectation that you will discuss this matter with Col. Gaither in the near future I am attempting to express our criticisms as briefly as possible in writing.

In our opinion the results of the mountain program have been disappointing. After eighteen months of effort the Army has failed to produce either a thoroughly trained mountain unit or a cadre of instructors capable of training troops in all phases of mountain work. A good deal of dissatisfaction is believed to exist at the Mountain Training Center, especially among the more thoughtful and experienced men whose abilities have not been put to good use. The 87th Mountain Infantry contains a very fine body of enlisted men with many specialists in the various phases of cold weather and mountain work and has been subjected to a great deal of miscellaneous training along these lines, but we do not regard it as either 1) a highly trained military organization which could be quickly conditioned for service under various extreme conditions of climate and terrain, or, 2) a body of trained mountaineers which could be readily brought to perfection as a military unit.

We ascribe this state of affairs primarily to two reasons:

- 1) The lack of a definite objective due to the inability of the War Department to determine the type or number of such troops required, or the time, manner or place in which they are to be used.
- 2) The failure to make adequate use of the body of men with mountaineering experience which exists in this country, either by the War Department or the Army Ground Forces - or most important of all - by the Mountain Training Center Command.

Authority NND 740062
By *DB* NARA Date 6-16-76

16 June 41
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Lt. Gen. L. McNair

-2-

June 16, 1943

We believe that the training problem could have been approached in three ways:

- 1) By forming units of mountaineers and giving them proper military training.
- 2) By taking first class military units and giving them "Conditioning" for the various types of countries and operations they might be called upon to face.
- 3) By forming units of suitable material, and
 - a) Training these units in the fundamentals of mountain work.
 - b) Giving them regular military training in mountain country.

The first course was impracticable because of a lack of sufficient mountaineers. Under the circumstances the third would seem to offer the best chance of success and it was this which was apparently tried by the Command. It could only have been successful had the men been provided with officers with a knowledge of mountaineering and with thoroughly experienced instructors. Provision for these was not made during the initial stages.

Specific Criticisms

We would like to offer the following specific criticisms for your consideration:

- 1) Failure to think through the need for mountain troops type, organization, and the manner and place of their employment.
- 2) Failure of the Army Ground Forces to make use of experienced mountaineers.
- 3) Lack of coordination between supply and field, that is, between the selection and procurement of appropriate equipment and instruction in its use in the field.
- 4) Failure of the War Department to consult mountaineers in considering possible theatres of operations and in planning such operations.
- 5) Failure of the Mountain Training Center to make the most effective use of those mountaineers under its command.
- 6) Lack of a coordinated systematic program of mountaineering training.
- 7) Over-emphasis on skiing.

Authority *INDIA*
By *DB* NARA Date *4-16-76*

Lt. Gen. L. McNair

-3-

June 16, 1943

The first four of these criticisms apply to the War Department and the headquarters of the Army Ground Forces; the last three to the Command of the Mountain Training Center.

We understand that much good work has been done in studying the methods employed by foreign armies. We recognize, however, that the experience of others can be used only to a limited extent because of the wide difference in objectives. For instance, the purpose of the Swiss mountain troops is primarily to draw the enemy on to difficult ground and to maintain resistance as long as possible in the high mountains.

Specific Recommendations

We have made a number of recommendations in the past, most of which we believe could have been followed to advantage. There has undoubtedly been much apparent conflict of ideas because of the inability of the Army to state its objectives clearly. Various advisors have had different opinions of the definition of mountain troops and the purpose for which they were to be used. Even though the War Department could not select theatres of operation or estimate numbers and types of mountain troops required, we believe it is essential for the Army Ground Forces to clarify its objective in training these special troops if it is to make the best use of the mountaineering experience which is still available.

We suggest the following steps in the absence of more specific knowledge of the Army's ideas regarding the uses to which these troops will be put:

- 1) The advice of an experienced mountaineer should be available to -
 - a) The Plans Division of the War Department when operations are being considered in mountainous or arctic regions.
 - b) The Headquarters of the Army Ground Forces for consultation on training matters.
 - c) A Commander called upon to operate in mountainous or arctic regions for planning operations and for selecting equipment, etc.
 - d) The staff of the Mountain Training Center for all questions involving mountain equipment, training, health, food, etc.

Officers and men with the necessary ability and experience are probably already in the Mountain Troops.

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By *DB* NARA Date 4-16-66

Lt. Gen. L. McNair

-4-

June 16, 1943

- 2) All officers, and as many non-coms as possible, should be given all around mountain training. A school of mountaineering should be established for this purpose.
- 3) Small groups of field officers should be taken on mountaineering expeditions in the American or Canadian mountains. We would specifically suggest that such a group be sent to the Canadian Alpine Club's course for officers.
- 4) Observers should be sent to the British School of Frontier Warfare in India, and possibly also to Scotland.

Organization of Mountain Troops

We understand from Col. Gaither that present plans call for the formation of two types of units for use in mountainous country:

- 1) Alpine troops
- 2) Light Divisions

The first would contain such mountaineers as are available and would be given as comprehensive training as possible in all types of mountain and cold weather work. They would undertake those tasks requiring a high degree of skill in mountain work and would act as the spearhead of attack in mountainous country. They would also provide guide companies or smaller groups to operate with the Light Divisions as reconnaissance groups, advance, flank and rear guards, and would provide expert advisors to assist the Command of the Light Divisions.

The Light Divisions would be trained for rough country work and would be capable of supplying themselves in mountainous terrain, but no attempt would be made to train either officers or men as expert mountaineers.

We consider this plan sound and undoubtedly the best which can be adopted with the material available and in a reasonable length of time. It is interesting to note that this is approximately the German system.

Availability of Mountaineers

A great majority of the men with mountain experience who could be of greatest use to the Army are already in the armed forces and we would suggest that an effort be made to transfer these men to positions where they could be used for training and planning. The older men not now in the armed forces might be of some use as instructors or advisors.

Conclusions

We are convinced that even at this late date it would be highly advantageous to the Army -

Authority NND 740662
By DB NARA Date 4-16-96

Lt. Gen. L. McNair

-5-

June 16, 1943

- 1) To attempt to make more use of experienced mountaineers as recommended above.
- 2) To undertake a thorough and systematic training of junior officers in the fundamentals of mountaineering.
- 3) To give field officers an understanding of what it means to live and travel in mountainous country by taking them on short climbing trips in difficult country.

We hope that this will be of some assistance in discussing the problem further.

Respectfully submitted,

J. C. Case, Chairman
 Mountain Warfare Committee
 American Alpine Club

jcc:ep

cc: (Blind) Col. Gaither
 " H. S. Hall
 Capt. Bates

*Sec. Am Alpine Club - present at meeting with McNair
 at 4:15 P.M.*

cc: 7/9/43 to Major W. A. Wood
 Dr. J. Monroe Thorington

*Nat. in Air Corps,
 President. American Alpine Club.*

July 16, 1943

Lt. General L. J. McNair
Commanding Officer
Army Ground Forces
Army War College
Washington, D. C.

Dear dear General:

Your letter of July 7 shows thoughtful consideration of the mountain training problem and of our views. From the thought and effort which you have put into this matter and the steps which have been taken, it seems reasonable to expect marked improvement. I want to express my real appreciation.

Since you are sending a copy of my letter of June 18 to General Jones, I am taking the liberty of enclosing three earlier memoranda on the same subject which might possibly contain material of interest.

With regard to the Canadian school it should be kept in mind that the objectives of the Canadian Army might not be the same as ours. As I understand it, their primary purpose is to demonstrate to a group of field officers that men of moderate mountaineering skill can move safely in fairly easy Alpine type country and to give them some idea of how it is done.

This was one of the advantages we had hoped to gain from having American officers attend similar camps and accompany parties on climbing expeditions last summer. In recommending a training school for officers we had, however, a further and more important objective and that was to show what could be done in the way of training officers and non-coms to lead their men in mountainous country and impart their knowledge to others. I hope this major objective will be taken into consideration when considering the report of our officers on the value of the Canadian camp.

Although the aim should be to have all such training taken over by the regular troop schools as soon as possible we are convinced that the best experience available should be employed in the initial stages. A number of the older mountaineers are ready to give any assistance which in your judgment may be desirable. It is still not too late to make some progress in this direction during 1943.

In writing you I unavoidably strayed out of the sphere of your own special interest. These other matters seem to me to be quite important

Authority NND 740662
By P.B. NARA Date 4-16-96

Lt. General L. J. McNair

-2-

July 16, 1943

and I would appreciate the opportunity of discussing them with you sometime at your convenience.

We shall watch the progress of the 87th Infantry and of the new 10th Light Division with the greatest interest.

Sincerely

John C. Case

cc

Encls.

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By *DB* NARA Date *6-16-76*

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HEADQUARTERS
ARMY GROUND FORCES
OFFICE OF THE COMMANDING GENERAL
ARMY WAR COLLEGE

Washington, D.C.

7 July 1943

Mr. John C. Case
26 Broadway
New York, N. Y.

Dear Mr. Case:

Please forgive my tardiness in replying to your informing and helpful letter of June 16th. The reason lies in the fact that, as I told you, I was about to go out to Camp Carson and wanted to go over the situation on the ground before replying. I returned from the trip on July 1st, far from completely informed, but still better oriented than before I made the trip.

You probably will be interested to know that the Mountain Training Center shortly will be changed into a division camp, the division to be the 10th Light Infantry Division. The division commander, General Lloyd E. Jones, already is on his way out there after having visited this headquarters. He returned recently from over a year of service in Alaska, Amchitka being his last station. The assistant division commander will be General Ruffner, whom you probably know, since he has been at the Mountain Training Center from the beginning. General Rolfe will go to Camp Carson for service with the 71st Light Infantry Division, another new unit. I believe that you will recognize in these changes a desire to inject new blood into our efforts at Camp Hale, also to bring there a practical view based on service in an active theater of operations.

I am sending your letter to General Jones, feeling that it will be most valuable to him in gaining an understanding of the situation in its broader aspects.

With reference to your specific criticisms:

(1), (2), (3), (4): I have not and do not feel that expert advice by mountaineers is essential either in the War Department or at this headquarters under present conditions. If and when operations of this character become imminent - which is not the case yet - then such advice and assistance would be in order, and no doubt would be obtained.

(5): I agree, and am looking to General Jones to improve the situation in this respect.

Authority LINDFAC62
By *DB* NARA Date 4-16-76

(6): I agree in this respect, also.

(7): Skiing was overemphasized initially, but I believe that this particular condition is by way of being corrected.

Your suggestion that advantage be taken of the offer of the Canadian Alpine Club is concurred in, and we intend to take action at the earliest practicable date. Further action, both abroad and at home, will depend largely on the benefits derived from the Canadian Club.

I feel that there should be what we call troop schools in mountaineering, conducted at Camp Hale, for its officers and possibly noncommissioned officers, and in advance of unit training of troops.

I agree that officers - especially the senior ones - should receive practical training in how to live and travel in difficult mountainous country.

We have in mind certain steps to stimulate the procurement of soldiers who are experienced in mountaineering, or who are interested in it. One of the difficulties experienced heretofore is that such men trickle in so slowly that the training progress of units was retarded seriously.

I can appreciate your view that the year and a half just passed has not shown as much progress as desirable, and I trust that the months to come may show a materially improved performance. I shall be greatly interested to learn of the performance of the 87th Mountain Infantry, which has left Camp Hale for something far more thrilling.

With best regards always, and many thanks for your interest and assistance.

Sincerely,

(Signed) L. J. McHAIR,
Lt. Gen., U.S.A.,
Commanding.

Authority LINDFOLCC62
By DB NARA Date 4-16-16

IMMEDIATE ACTION

REPRODUCED AT THE NATIONAL ARCHIVES

RG 107-183
Box 52
Folder 5
Item 3
Page 11

WAR DEPARTMENT
The Adjutant General's Office
Washington

AG 353
(12-3-40) M M-C

December 5, 1940.

SUBJECT: Relations with National Ski Association.

TO: Commanding Generals, First, Second and Fourth Armies;
U.S. Troops in Alaska; IX (tactical) Corps,
II (tactical) Corps, VI (tactical) Corps; First, Third,
Fifth, Sixth, Forty-first and Forty-fourth Divisions;
Commanding Officer, Fourth Cavalry; and
Chief of Staff, GHQ.

1. The National Ski Association of America has volunteered to assist in connection with winter warfare training and home defense as follows:

- a. To assist commanders concerned in technical training and selection of equipment;
- b. To submit technical studies, as requested by the War Department;
- c. To assist in home defense near our northern boundaries.

This assistance has the approval of the War Department.

2. An accredited representative of the National Ski Association, resident in the locality of the unit concerned, is to gain contact with the Commanding General of each division designated to conduct winter training. The division commander will arrange with this representative the detailed plans for the assistance to be rendered to their headquarters and subordinate units by such individual members of the National Ski Association as volunteer their part-time services. The National Ski Association is to make contact in similar manner with such non-divisional units as may engage in training or recreational skiing.

3. A committee of the National Ski Association has been organized to conduct research and report upon specific problems of equipment and camping technique. Such special studies will be initiated only on request of the War Department. It is expected that initial studies

Incl. 1. IMMEDIATE ACTION

Authority: *INDIA*
By: *DB* NARA Date: 4-16-76

will deal with the ski binding and ski boot, the sleeping bag, the sectional tent, the evacuation toboggan, and the complete individual equipment for mountain patrols. Field commanders will make appropriate recommendation to the War Department for additional studies, if required.

4. In order to assist in home defense, the National Ski Association is to divide the northern portion of the United States into appropriate zones or areas. Within these areas the National Ski Association personnel will become thoroughly familiar with the local terrain to the end that they may be prepared to furnish guides to the Army and to extend the anti-aircraft warning and antiparachute defense systems into comparatively inaccessible regions. In this project, the National Ski Association intends to coordinate and cooperate with the War Department, other Federal Departments concerned, State Governments, and such organizations as the American Legion and the Boy Scouts of America.

5. The cooperation and assistance of the National Ski Association is offered by its officials as a voluntary contribution to defense without personal remuneration of any kind. Military personnel is enjoined to develop this cordial relationship to the end that national defense receive the full benefit of the technical knowledge and experience of the patriotic civilians concerned.

By order of the Secretary of War:



Major General,
The Adjutant General.

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