



#115

## James R. Hendrickson

Born: 1913 Died: 1948

*James "Jimmy" Hendrickson was born in 1913 in Eau Claire, Wisconsin, and was an all-around athlete. He began skiing when he was six, and at age 23 was a member of the U.S. Olympic Team.*

James R. Hendrickson was an all around athlete from Eau Claire, Wisconsin. He began skiing at age six, entered his first competition at age seven, and was exhibition jumping around the country when he was nine.

Jimmy, as he was known to all, was Class "B" National Champion in 1934, did well as a member of the United States Olympic Jumping Team at Garmish-Partenkirchen, Germany, with Adolph Hitler in attendance, placing sixth in the special jumping.

As a youngster of only sixteen, Jimmy entered the 1929 National Ski Association meet at St. Paul, Minnesota, and out-jumped all other competitors. This is the type of potential Jimmy had. He won the Central United States Ski Association title as well as the Far West Ski Association title in 1935 and 1936.

Jim Hendrickson joined the United States Army in 1942 serving as a lieutenant. He was assigned to the Norwegian Ski Battalion at Camp Hale, Colorado. Hendrickson found himself on Omaha Beach on D-Day, and during the Battle of the Bulge near Cherbourg, he and his Norwegian friends found themselves surrounded by Germans without skis, so they stole skis from the Germans and escaped capture. This is the type of courage Jim had, but of course, some luck was involved as well.

Jim's luck ran out on January 18, 1948. After surviving the European War for two years in heavy combat, he was killed participating in his favorite sport, ski jumping. His fatal accident happened on Norge Hill near Chicago, Illinois, on his second jump. A near-perfect ride ended in disaster on the flats, when Jim fell. He was hit by his ski and rendered unconscious. Jim never regained consciousness and died several hours later at the Norwegian-American Hospital in Chicago.

Jim Hendrickson was elected posthumously to the U.S. National Ski Hall of Fame in 1971.

