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L. B. Barney MacNab

Born: 1902 Died: 1968



L.B. "Barney" MacNab was born in Oregon, in 1902, and was a very avid and proficient skier. In 1937, he and a group of his friends were skiing on Mount Hood and saw that skiing was starting to advance in the far West. They felt as more people participated in the sport, there was more chance of someone getting seriously injured far from an access road. The group did something about it! They formed the first Mount Hood Ski Patrol, the first ever on a major ski area.

L.B. (Barney) MacNab was an avid if not proficient skier and because he was, skiing all over the United States became a less hazardous sport at a time when it was almost considered foolhardy. Ski patrols are part of the scene today, but it was Barney MacNab and others like him who started it all. In the winter of 1937-1938 on Mount Hood in Oregon, a few outdoor-loving hikers and climbers-turned-skiers saw the handwriting on the wall. Soon the back country would be dotted with nice young people looking for a fresh-air thrill on a pair of 7-foot skis, and they would more than likely wind up with broken bones far from the nearest road.

MacNab and a handful of other Mount Hooders saw the need and did something about it. They organized the first patrol in a major area. They recruited climbers and hikers and first-aid teachers, and with the help of the United States Forest Service, molded the entire group into the Mount Hood Ski Patrol. It was an effervescent group. Each weekend brought new and exciting problems and each weekend zeal, savvy and fortitude found the solutions.

Ski Patrols have come a long way since those awkward beginnings, but at Mount Hood the only difference was the vastly-improved equipment and the newly-proven techniques of the patrolmen. It was still a volunteer patrol.

MacNab was the first president of the Mount Hood Ski Patrol and wore Badge No.1 proudly. Because of the instant success of the patrol, the National Ski Association of America asked MacNab to serve as an advisor when the association began formulating its own National Ski Patrol System. MacNab later served as a director of the Northwest region of the NSPS until the Northwest was thoroughly blanketed with competent patrols.

His enthusiastic work extended regionally and nationally in patrol matters, but his first love was the original cadre of persons who formed the first Mount Hood Patrol. He was particularly proud of the fact that nearly 25 of those originals were honored as charter members of the National Ski Patrol System. Barney wore Badge No. 17 in the National Ski Patrol System.

MacNab was born in 1902 and died in 1968. He attended Notre Dame (where a broken back cut short a football career). He founded a successful insurance office in Portland and was a familiar sight at any gathering of persons involved in skiing or the outdoors. His genuine enthusiasm for all things outdoors, and an infectious way of getting things done, contributed mightily to the early growth of skiing at a time when the sport fairly screamed for help.

L.B. "Barney" MacNab was elected to the U.S. National Ski Hall of Fame in 1970.

