

# NORSE-SPEAKING SOLDIERS TRAIN AT PANDO CAMP

## New Mountain Troops Hint at Future Action In Europe.

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A glimpse of the long foresight with which Uncle Sam is preparing against the day when the Nazi-scourged smaller countries of Europe can be again reclaimed to freedom was disclosed Saturday with the army announcement that several hundred Norwegian-American soldiers have arrived at two-mile-high Camp Hale, atop the Colorado Rockies, for mountain troop training.

The troops, each of whom speaks the language of his ancestral homeland, will immediately enter the stiff winter conditioning program at the army's new mountain warfare training center, to be ready for invaluable shock troop duty when the United Nations launch their long-hoped-for push on the European continent.

Their arrival at Camp Hale was announced Saturday by Brig. Gen. Onslow S. Rolfe, commanding officer of the training center.

The battalion is composed solely of soldiers of Norwegian ancestry, it was stated, and one of the requirements for admission is ability to speak Norwegian. Some of the arriving soldiers are already crack skiers. Others are not, but will soon learn all the arts of one of modern warfare's toughest and most dangerous branches.

Camp Hale, Colo., Dec. 19.—Col. Onslow S. Rolfe, commanding officer of the newly formed mountain troops, has been made a brigadier general, the war department announced.

An active skier and a crack horseman himself, General Rolfe was well equipped by long military experience to undertake the training of the United States' own hard-hitting ski-troop battalions now arriving rapidly at the army's huge year-round cantonment at Camp Hale, Colo.

Born in the Granite state of New Hampshire, Onslow S. Rolfe forsook a Dartmouth family tradition to attend West Point—and jumped into action in France immediately following his graduation as second lieutenant in 1917. For more than a year he fought with the Seventh infantry, Third division, being twice decorated for bravery under fire, until he was wounded on Oct. 20, 1918. He took with him to the hospital the D. S. C. and the Order of the Purple Heart—plus a burning desire to get back in the fight again.

On his return to this side of the Atlantic, he was assigned to the Third division, and in 1920 was sent for a year's course to the infantry school at Fort Benning, Ga. Then followed four academic years within the ivy walls of Rutgers college, as an R. O. T. C. instructor.

### HAD THREE-YEAR TOUR IN HAWAII.

After two years with the Eighteenth infantry at Fort Slocum, N. Y., he crossed the continent and sailed to the Hawaiian islands to take up a three-year tour of duty with the Twenty-seventh infantry, twenty-second brigade, at Schofield barracks. Nearby was real mountainous country, and he used to explore it on horseback in off-duty hours. At that time, however mountain troops were still a distant dream in the United States army.

Back in the mainland once more, in 1930, he served four years as an instructor for the 128th infantry, Wisconsin National Guard, at Madison, Wis. Snow lay deep on the ground here during the winter months and temperatures plummeted far below zero, yet the idea of putting infantry troops on skis remained in the realms of fantasy, an impractical sportsman's fad. All this Rolfe watched, and noted, and remembered.

Then came an order from higher up. Rolfe was to report as a student to the command and general staff school at Fort Leavenworth, Kan. For two years he studied division, corps and army tactics. He then changed station and enrolled as a student in the field artillery school, studying for a whole year in the battery officer's course.

### MADE ARTILLERY INSTRUCTOR.

Now, besides being an experienced infantry officer, he had added artillery to his repertoire as well—and in 1937 he was appointed infantry instructor at the field artillery school, Fort Sill, Okla. Two years later Germany invaded Norway; three years later Thermopylae fell. Mountain troops were in the news at last, but they were troops of the enemy. The Allies had none that could match them yet.

Then, in November, 1941, the United States army took a historic step. General Marshall activated the first mountain unit in American history. To Oklahoma flashed a radiogram, ordering Colonel Rolfe to assume command of the newly formed Mountain infantry. And to every outfit in the United States went a directive requesting that men with skiing and mountaineering experience be transferred to this new command.

Ski schools were set up; former civilian experts, now privates and corporals, taught enlisted men and officers fundamentals of military skiing and mountaineering. And in the summer they learned the none too gentle art of packing mules up mountain trails and rock climbing.

Now, General Rolfe in command of the mountain training center, in its two-mile high mountain aerie, knows that he can go anywhere he orders his men to go.