UNCLE BUD’S HUT

Honoring a Fallen Warrior

JUST NORTH of Turquoise Lake, in a small clearing surrounded by pine trees, sits Uncle Bud’s Hut. The hut’s south-facing windows open up to Bald Eagle Mountain and Mount Massive’s towering ridgeline; Galena Peak watches over the cabin from the north.

The hut, which is owned by 10th Mountain Division Hut Association, was constructed in 1989 with funds from 10th Mountain veteran Bud Winter’s siblings. The hut serves as a memorial to Winter who was killed in World War II in 1945. Winter, who grew up ski racing in New York, headed to Camp Hale, a 10th Mountain training facility in between Vail and Leadville, just out of high school. He was the youngest man to join the division’s 10th Reconnaissance Troop.

At Camp Hale, Winter trained in alpine warfare alongside his ski heroes Walter Prager and Friedl Pfeifer. He was known for his enthusiasm and athleticism. In February of 1944, Winter completed the Trooper Traverse, a 40-mile ski voyage from Leadville to Aspen. Winter, and 32 of Camp Hale’s strongest skiers, were selected for the traverse from over 10,000 10th Mountain men. Over four days, the soldiers traveled through dangerous avalanche terrain, over three 13,000 foot passes and down miles of fresh powder.

The following year, Winter deployed to northern Italy with his 10th Mountain comrades. The division would see combat for the first time in the German-occupied Po River Valley. “I think Bud was the only U.S. soldier who brought his fly rod with him to Italy,” 10th Mountain veteran Charles Hampton was quoted in Peter Shelton’s book Climb to Conquer.

It was in Italy where Winter met his fate. In a battle in the Northern Apennines, Winter’s sergeant prepared to advance forward alone into direct fire, but Winter kept him back. “No, you stay here. I’m going to go, you have a wife and kids.” Winter communicated over the radio, but he was killed by enemy fire as he moved forward, just two weeks before the war ended.

After the war, the sergeant traveled to New York to thank Winter’s parents in person. The soldier was awarded a
Bronze Star and two Purple Hearts. Winter’s father mourned his son through the written word. His poem to Winter, “Silver Skis,” is displayed in calligraphy on a wall of Uncle Bud’s Hut, offering a glimpse into the man who inspired it.

Sleep peacefully my Buddy boy
Beneath Italian skies.
No more freckled face I’ll see
And tears are in my eyes.

Fred Winter, Bud’s older brother, who passed away in 2012, believed Bud knew his own destiny because he lived every day to the fullest. “He got the most out of life,” Fred said in a documentary. “We had to do something special to keep his memory alive.”

Uncle Bud’s Hut has allowed Fred and Barbara’s children to connect with the uncle they never knew. As the hut was being constructed in the summer of 1989, Fred and Barbara’s teenage son, John Winter, stayed with Leadville locals Cheryl and John Wells. Every morning, John would drive the Wells’ 1975 CJ-5 Jeep down Lake County’s winding dirt roads to the hut. One by one, day after day, John Winter selected and moved rocks from a nearby hillside’s scree field to the hut’s base. The same stones line the hut’s front facade today.

“My husband grieved for his brother his whole life,” Fred’s wife Barbara told the Leadville Herald. “Bud never had the opportunity to have his own family. We built the hut so Bud could be an uncle to all the kids passing through.”

This was exactly the case for the Wells’ daughter, Kristen, who grew up visiting the hut. Until Kristen was 12 years-old, she thought Bud was her uncle by blood. When she told Fred Winter, who was a friend of her family, that she had believed Bud was a family member for so long, he began to cry.

“That’s exactly what the Winters wanted everyone who came to the hut to feel like ... to feel that Bud was their uncle,” John Wells said. “He represents all the uncles gone in the war.”

Silver Skis

And when the war is over
And the lords of nations meet,
May they remember boys like you
And make the peace complete.
And may God give you silver skis,
To ski celestial hills.
And fishing rods and lines and reels,
To fish those streams and rills.

—FRED H. WINTER, 1945

Throughout this winter, the Leadville Herald plans to delve into the history of huts closest to Leadville. In doing so, the paper hopes to recount the lives of the huts’ namesakes and the rich history of the region’s snow-capped mountains. Uncle Bud’s Hut, available to rent through 10th Mountain Division Hut Association, sleeps up to 16. To learn more, visit www.huts.org.

—RACHEL WOOLWORTH | Leadville Herald
USFS Proposes Fee Increase

TH MOUNTAIN NEEDS YOUR HELP.
The US Forest Service is proposing to increase the fee at Vail Pass Winter Recreation Area from $6/person to $10/person and it needs to hear what you think of it. 10th Mountain thinks the fee increase reflects responsible stewardship of the area and will improve the experience at the six huts located in the area, and strongly supports the proposal. Please join us in this important effort by submitting informed comments to the USFS.

Understanding the history of this recreational area can aid perspective. Visitation began to increase in the 1980’s as the USFS permitted huts, snowmobile rentals, snowcat and heli-skiing operations, and other commercial activities. Snowmobiles were allowed to travel everywhere on the forest except for wilderness and ski areas.

In the 1990’s, management began to include suggested non-motorized envelopes around the huts, volunteer grooming, monitoring, and occasional USFS staffing. Visitation continued to increase and it became evident that the experience—for hut visitors and other visitors—was not meeting expectations, and more active management was needed.

Through a series of meetings that included mediation and strong public input, the agency established travel management prescriptions (non-motorized, motorized, hybrid, cat skiing) for the entire area and improved essential operating services such as grooming, trail maintenance, signage, patrols, plowing parking lots, and staffing.

The fee program was first implemented in 1998, and since then various fee structures have been utilized to pay for these services. Of note, the one constant in all the fee structures has been that all users paid the same amount regardless of travel mode. This has established a crucial (and tenuous) balance of influence, power, and general fairness.

The current fee structure was set in 2005 at a rate to meet expenses at that time. Since then, expenses have increased, purchasing value has decreased, operating deficits have become larger, and the agency has had no choice except to progressively reduce services, including dropping to a 4-day/week presence this year. As you might expect, this has affected everyone’s recreational experience and not in a positive manner. The agency understands this and is proposing to increase the fee for the day pass to $10 and the season pass to $65 effective winter 2020-2021.

The USFS is controlling expenses and finding ways to do more with less. It has reduced its presence to four days per week, has developed collaborative partnerships with Colorado Parks and Wildlife, CDOT, Vail Pass Task Force, volunteers, and local stakeholders to make up for diminished funding, and augmented fee receipts with funds from other programs.

The Vail Pass Task Force (which serves to advise the agency on management issues and administers grooming and plowing operations) is also working to make fee collection more efficient, reduce grooming expenses and is raising funds from local communities and stakeholders. Despite these efforts, the deficit continues to widen, services continue to be reduced, and the value of the recreational experience will continue to decline. The situation is grave: without a fee increase, the operational deficit next year is projected to be over $60,000. This is simply no longer tenable.

The six huts located in the Vail Pass area (Chuck’s, Jay’s, Walter’s, Janet’s, Jackal and Fowler/Hilliard) are popular, and over 13,000 user nights occur in the winter, which equates to twenty-five percent of winter hut use across the entire 10th Mountain System. People visiting these huts should be able to have a recreational experience that meets their expectations.

Hut visitors in the Vail Pass area expect to share portions of some routes with snowmobiles given the high concentration of use and configuration of trailheads and routes, but they also expect quiet, non-motorized, experiences while at the huts and on day trips from the huts. The quality of the experience at the huts and in designated non-motorized areas adjacent to the huts is directly tied to the level of USFS presence and its management programs.

If approved, the fee increase would allow the USFS to bring management back up to previous levels and provide an experience that meets all users’ expectations. It would improve education, signage and grooming. Conducting patrols seven days/week would improve the ability to respond effectively in emergency situations such as avalanches, collisions, and other mishaps, and help preserve and protect those areas designated for human-powered use.

You can learn more about this proposed fee increase and submit comments at http://www.fs.usda.gov/goto/whiteriver/feeproposals. If you wish to learn more about 10th Mountain’s perspective on this issue, please contact me at (970) 925-4554 or ben@huts.org.

—BEN DODGE | Executive Director
10th Mountain Division Hut Association
Tipi Base Camp Supports Hut Trips

Tipis are Native American cathedrals. They stand tall and create a vertical force upwards toward the heavens. Tipis form circular spaces that make gatherings intimate and close. The wind gently moves the tipi fabrics. Rain pelts rhythmically against them. Lightning illuminates their conical symmetry.

In spring of 2018, Huts For Vets erected three large tipis on a prime piece of ranch land in the Roaring Fork Valley. Thanks to a local ranching family, the veterans we host enjoy a setting graced with a full view of the Elk Mountain Ridge, from Mt. Sopris to Capitol Peak.

This new basecamp is where Huts For Vets stages summer trips to Margy’s Hut, which for six years has been the venue for veterans and active duty military men and women who have suffered trauma as a result of their service.

Thanks to the 10th Mountain Huts, our veterans experience—many for the first time—the beauty of public lands in the Hunter-Frying Pan Wilderness, 180,000 acres of dramatic mountain peaks, plunging valleys, vast forests, and rushing creeks.

Huts For Vets summer-only trips begin at the tipi basecamp where deer, elk, coyotes and occasional bears wander through. Solar showers and a portable chuck wagon trailer give the camp all the comforts of home and a rare sense of place in the Elk Range of the Central Rockies.

From basecamp, we drive rural mountain roads to the old mining town of Lenado where the 10-mile hike to Margy’s begins in a lush riparian ecosystem bursting with wildflowers and six varieties of edible, wild fruits. Here, in a natural sanctuary, is where the healing begins for Huts For Vets participants.

Coupled with discussions of assigned texts that engender philosophical impact, these three-day hut trips change lives by enlarging perspectives whether from a 360-degree vista from the top of Mt. Yeckel, through nature immersion during wilderness solos, or following a discussion of Viktor Frankl’s “Man's Search for Meaning.”

Margy’s Hut becomes a home away from home, a safe place where rustic living complements and completes tipi living on the valley floor. Taken as a whole, there is no other program we know of that touches the lives of veterans so holistically amid the enormity of pristine wilderness.

Huts For Vets plans to take six groups of men and women participants to Margy’s in summer 2019, serving, at no expense to them, about 60 veterans and active duty military who have an opportunity for finding peace and healing in nature and in the cozy comfort of Margy’s Hut.

Thank you, 10th Mountain, for making these trips possible!

—Paul Andersen | Executive Director of Huts For Vets

For more information on Hut For Vets, please visit our website, which describes our unique healing opportunities—www.hutsforvets.org.
We climbed off the cold mini bus, ready to start an adventure. I was worried about the trek: 5.5 miles, snowshoeing for hours, but looking forward to the warm and fun hut we had been promised.

This was to be my first hut trip, and I had no idea what to expect besides a long and tiring hike in the snow. I put on my pack, about 25 pounds, and started off. Trudging through the snow up a steep hill for the first 15 minutes left me thinking I could do this, easy. But when we arrived at the actual trailhead, I knew this would be anything but that.

We started again, snowshoeing our way up, or for a few of my fellow peers, skinning their way up on skis. As the sun began to beat down directly above us, we kept going. I and a few others started falling behind, having to take small breaks during a particularly grueling uphill section that lasted a good 40 minutes.

We finally met the others for a quick lunch, realizing we were falling behind on schedule. We started quickly up again, but quickly I was left behind again. I remember thinking I should have gone on a few training runs before the trip. I was tired, hot, and aching.

An hour before arriving at the hut, I was stopping every few minutes, feeling completely overwhelmed by the intensity of the high elevation and uphill trudge. My teacher, Greg Sustad, just kept admiring our surroundings and pointing out all the beauty around us. I was thinking the trip was a horrible decision on my part as I continued to trudge up the slope.

Greg taught me to get out of my mind, away from the pain, and become aware of the beauty that surrounds every adventure. I recognized the beautiful Aspen trees I’ve grown up surrounded by, the towering giant trees.

We kept hiking, constantly aware of the fact that when the sun dipped behind the western horizon the temperatures would quickly plummet. We were expected to be in the warm hut before then. I kept going, feeling as if my achy legs couldn’t take another step, but forcing them to do so anyway. We finally saw the beautiful McNamara Hut come into view, and I couldn’t believe we had made it.

I took off my snowshoes and rushed inside where everyone had collapsed into the benches or around the fire. We were all exhausted, but so very proud of our accomplishments. We made dinner—homemade burritos—and played card games. The bonding around the fire and around playing UNO is something I will never forget. I fell asleep watching the flickering fire, trying to memorize its dance.

In the morning, we made breakfast, packed, and headed out. Going downhill I felt pure freedom, running down at a fearless speed. I kept up with the group, but felt like we were never going to get back to our beloved minibus. We finally arrived and headed home. This was my very first hut trip, and it taught me so much.

I am currently enrolled in my second semester of Outdoor Education at Glenwood Springs High School, where we are training to go on our first trip of the semester: The hut trip. I am thrilled to have my second experience snowshoeing up to McNamara Hut. These are the times in my life where I learn perseverance. Where I learn determination. Where I see hard work paying off. Where I make new friends. Where I create lifelong memories. And I cannot wait to do it again.

—GISELY TORRES
Glenwood Springs High School | Class of 2019

10th Mountain's Backcountry Explorations Program offers discounts to qualifying school groups and other non-profits.
Hard-Working Hut Volunteers | 2018

We just can't say it enough about these folks... Thank You 10th Mountain Volunteers!

PHOTOS BY DAVE LEE
EVEN WHEN THE SNOW IS LONG-GONE from the peaks, the **Backcountry Snowsports Initiative** (www.cmc.org/BSI) is working to protect human powered winter recreation across the state.

- The **Grand Mesa Uncompahgre Gunnison (GMUG) National Forest** is updating their Forest Plan and looking for input on how to manage winter recreation. Several proposal for new Wilderness and Special Management areas will help protect backcountry skiing areas around Crested Butte, Ouray and Telluride: www.gmugrevision.com, www.gunnisonpubliclands.org. Stay tuned for opportunities to comment this summer!

- Colorado **Senator Michael Bennet** and House Representative **Joe Neguse** recently introduced the **Colorado Outdoor Recreation & Economy Act** to protect over 400,000 acres of Wilderness landscapes and recreation opportunities in our state.

**WHAT’S INCLUDED:**
- Continental Divide Wilderness, Recreation and Camp Hale Legacy Act
- San Juan Mountain Act
- Thompson Divide Withdrawal and Protection Act
- Curecanti National Recreation Area Boundary Establishment Act

Help us thank Senator Bennet & Representative Neguse for their support of this bill and encourage the rest of Colorado’s representatives to back the bill! www.cmc.org/Conservation/ActionAlerts.aspx#22

- **Clear Creek Ranger District** is conducting an analysis of snow cat tours/backcountry skiing in Dry Gulch (northwest of I-70). BSI submitted comments during scoping period: new motorized use and avalanche blasting conflicts with traditional backcountry ski terrain and wildlife habitat. The draft Environmental Assessment is expected this winter, stay tuned for an opportunity to comment.

**UPCOMING EVENTS**

**Backcountry Film Fest** | Showings across the state support BSI—includes BSI film! www.cmc.org/BSI

**Colorado Wilderness Conference** | May 10-11, 2019 in Buena Vista. Info at www.cmc.org/wild

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__JULIE MACH__

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PERCHED ON THE NORTHERN FLANK of Mount Baldy, close to Breckenridge, Colorado, **Sisters Cabin** is the latest addition to the Summit Huts Association hut system. Its contemporary design and state-of-the-art interior is a new departure in backcountry accommodation.

**Sisters Cabin** was given its name by Sue Sturm of The Sturm Family Foundation, our donor. Sue and her close-knit group of female friends consider themselves the ‘Sisters.’ These women are avid backcountry skiers and hut users, and it seemed fitting that the fifth addition to the Summit Huts Association should honor this adventurous group of women with this moniker.

**Sisters Cabin** accommodates 14 people, with a modern kitchen, hickory wood floors, wood-burning stove, indoor composting toilets and a sauna. After you climb a 1,300-ft. vertical gain on a picturesque ski trail covering 3.8 miles, you will be welcomed by the sight of this beautiful cabin.

Remove your boots in the vestibule and hang them on the custom-made boot rack. When you enter the main room, you will note huge windows flooding the rooms with natural light and warmth from the sun. The panoramic views of the Ten Mile Range are breathtaking.

The fully stocked kitchen, which includes an oven, lends itself to preparing wonderful meals. Have dinner on the beautiful handcrafted walnut table and then relax afterwards on the comfortable window seats. This cabin even has a sofa which you can move to toast your toes in front of the fire!

Replenish your tired limbs after a day’s skiing in the wood-burning sauna. **Sisters Cabin** has access to some of the finest skiing Summit County has to offer and is a wonderful place for families and perfect for first time hut users.

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10th Mountain Outreach

EVERY FALL 10TH MOUNTAIN makes informational presentations about the hut system and hut trips at several REI stores in Colorado. The talks, presented by James Fulton, are a great opportunity for people to get acquainted with the hut system and hut trips.

Whether you are a regular hut user, or have always wanted to know more about the best hut system in North America, these presentations can help send you on your way to one of our 35 huts. James will be on hand to answer all of your winter (or summer) hut expedition questions. Fall 2019 dates will be posted at www.huts.org

10th Mountain Medical Course | 2019

Earn a Wilderness First Aid (WFA) Certificate!
Courses will take place over two 8-hour days.

Anschutz Medical Campus, Denver
November 16-17 and 23-24

Sangree’s Hut | December 6-8 and 13-15

This course is equivalent to a Wilderness First Aid Course, but is contextualized for 10th Mountain Hut travel and extreme winter adventure, including topics of avalanche safety, high altitude, hypothermia, frostbite, immersion, snow travel, trauma, musculoskeletal soft tissue issues, dislocations/fractures, navigation, and lost persons.

Expert faculty from the CU School of Medicine will teach through a combination of lectures and hands-on practical skills, and participants will receive a certificate from the School of Medicine attesting to a WFA in the 10th Mountain Medicine Course.

Sign up | www.huts.org | 970/925-5775