Vet recalls European escapades

By Teri Banes
attif writer

"I got into the akt troopers the same
way I got into the Army," recalls Livenian Roy Puckett. "I was drafted."
With that, Puckett, a recent high
school graduate began his journey to
the European front with one of the
most decorated flighting units of World
War II — the 10th Mountain Division.
Made up of three batallino of 10,000
men, the newly formed flighting group
was exclusively trained for combat in
the treacherous mountain terrain of the
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Puckett. Initially, the enlisted men like
Puckett. arrived with little or no experience on skt. Some had never even
come close to a mountain.
"I had never owned a pair of skis in
my life." said Puckett, a business
teacher at Bishop Borges High School
in Redford Township. "But for a young
company to the control of the III of the
WHIEN PUCKETT was drafted, he
was first assigned to a unit on Kiska in
the Aleution Islands. He arrived in
August 1943 after fighting with the
Japanese had ceased. He remained
there for six months, repalring roads
and other clean-up chores, before returning to the states to begin training
as a ski trooper in January 1944.

Puckett became part of the division's
first battalion, the 87th, and had his
first taste of the job ahead in Camp
Hale, Colo, where he received his basic
training and learned how to ski. There,
he participated in windre theremorathe and other clean-up chores, before returning to the states to begin training
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wearing skit shoes and skit in temperaturnes of 30 degrees below zero. After
hat, the Army sent him and his troop
to Camp Swilt, a base on the outskirts
that, the Army sent him and his troop
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rade up of the 85th, 86th and 87th batailions, was transferred overseas to Itlay, Just out of his teen, years, Puckett
was assigned as a messenger, often detwas assigned as a messenger, often
detwas assigned as a messenger, often
fire and darkness.

The division gained attention for
"winning the war in Italy."

When we first got there, there was

IRONICALLY, PUCKETT, who

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was point on and just concentreated on your foil.

"Sometimes you got fresh eggs from
the batallion farmers and a couple of
the sharp short of the Mark of the Michigan
Campground venters of recreational
vehicles and and vehicles and
hard was responsithe also recalls many injuries from
solders falling in the snow. "The skis
weather."
When the war ended in Europe,
turned of the stance of the

break it and keep the German forces on the move. We shortened the war considerably."

In a total of 114 days, spanning the period between lanuary and July of 1845, the lanuary has been seen to the lanuary of 1845, the lanuary has been large. Mr. Belivedere and Po Valley."

At Riva Ridge, considered a major turning point for the Allies during the war, the lighting unit displayed its talent acquired from specialized training. "It was very steep on one side and the Germans, who were on the other side, hadn't placed any guards there. They didn't anticipate anyone coming over. But at night, the 85th used pick axes and ropes and made it over, surprising the Germans." Said Puckett. THE DIVISION became the most decorated unit in the European Theter. But it also that a high casualty, y. Out of 10,000 men, '92 were kitted and 4,154 were wounded Puckett, himself, carned a Bronre Star for delivering a message warning others of an upcoming battle. U.S. Sen. Robert Dole of Kansas, one of today's most well-known members, lost an arm in the fighting. "Oh, yeah, you were scared. But at

known members, lost an arm in the fighting.

"Oh, yeah, you were scared. But at that young age, with all your buddies all helpling one another, and once you saw your friends being killed, you forgot what was going on and just concentrated on your job."

In all, he remembers they covered about 100 miles wearing 60-pound backpacks complete with tents and rations.

dents who were members of the ski juries, was hospitalized when he was on leave in Detroit. A roller skatling acticulated sent in the interior benefits for three months with a knee injury.

Today, the men of the Mountain Division have remained a close-knit veterangerup.

"Maybe when you've fought with someone and your life depended on your buddles, you get attached. It's the saint.

Today, the 10th Mountain Division Association has held five national conventions. The gatherings have twice taken place in Vail and Lake Placid, popular ski resorts, but during the summents of the ski troopers.

"Camp Hale is torn down, there's and paredies. "Check the saint was the stated echerations in their honor, complete with parties and parades.

"When you go up to those little mountain towns, they declare it a holiday."

There are also local chapters to the organization. In Michigan, the association's Love the division returned mounts and the state of the division returned mountain towns, they declare it a holiday."

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their honor, compiete win parties and parades.

"When you go up to those little mountain towns, they declare it a holiday."

There are also local chapters to the organization. In Michigan, the association's Lower Michigan Chapter, meets twice a year, Puckett is its historian. In LIVONIA, Puckett is one of live veterans from the group. Other resi-

guide

seling Packet in

available

Camping

founded Vaif and one of the guys was responsible for Aspen."

Today, Puckett says he skis on occa-sion, but is not an avid fan of the sport. Neither of his two children have devel-oped a fancy for the sport either.





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Nuclear war discussed If I brought an end to the war and saved a potential one-million American casualities. "It's difficult new to make a judgment about something that happened 45 years ago," Gumbleton said. 'It clearly violated the norms of the just war theology. Obviously, we have to say the bombing of innocent people cannot be justified morally. "It was not necessary to bomb those two cities. The "Japanacon recommended" in the graduater author to the two war. We knew this. We refused because we had a policy of unconditional surrender."

Continued from Page 1

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that people would read the pastoral letter and then
make a decision, based on their conselence, on war
and peace.
"The most dangerous moral issue in the public
order is the nuclear arms race," Gumbleton said,
"it's probably the most important decision this nation has ever had to make."
But the bishops are clear in pointing out that any
warfare, whether conventional or nuclear, may be
waged only against combatants, avoiding population centers.
"That means even if our cities have been attacked, even then, we may not morally retalliate,"
Gumbleton said. "The targeting of cities is immorah.

"You must be sure that violence will be used against combatants. And how difficult it becomes to fulfill that condition when it comes to modern warfare."

warfare."
YET ANY "deliberate initiation of nuclear war," Gembleton said, "can never be morally justified. Whoever initiates nuclear war similarly takes responsibility for its escalation."
However, he also said that when a nation is under attack by nuclear weapons, it may respond with nuclear weapons.





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