

MILITARY PERSONNEL LEARN TO SKI AT SNOQUALMIE PASS DURING WW II¹

WAR SLOWS THEN STOPS SKIING

World War II started for the United States on December 7, 1941, when Japan bombed Pearl Harbor and war was declared on Japan and Germany. The war changed everything, although it took some time for its full effects to be felt. Skiing slowed as men went off to war and women had to deal with war-time living conditions which included rationing of items such as food, clothing, gasoline and tires. Skiing initially continued however, as did scheduled tournaments. The *American Ski Annual* described the 1942 season.

The entry of the United States into the war did not stop skiing, but seemed rather to serve as a stimulus. There were more skiers out last winter than before, and we in the PNSA had more ski tournaments, rather than less. Many beginners were introduced into the sport, and ski trains, especially for the recreation of war workers, reached a new group who inevitable succumbed to the lure of the snowy slopes.²

The Seattle Times Ski School actually expanded its offerings for junior skiers for the winter of 1942. The Seattle Ski Club sponsored junior jumping instruction at the Ski Bowl, and the Times said with Olav Ulland teaching young skiers the art of jumping, a national four-event champion may emerge from the “ranks of Ski Bowl-goers.” Ken Syverson’s ski school emphasized practicing turns more slowly, improving one’s swing, and “feeling that ‘flow of motion,’ which is so essential in handling a greater speed with ease, accuracy and gracefulness.”³

In the spring of 1942, Seattle ski writers asked with the war going on, “what’s to become of skiing?” Many old guard skiers will be in the service, although some would continue skiing as members of mountain regiments. The rest will wonder how to get to the mountains with gasoline and tire rationing. The Pacific Northwest Ski Association (PNSA) planned on a competitive season at Stevens and Snoqualmie Pass where the highways would be kept open. Ski clubs discussed combining to charter buses to take their members skiing, and Snoqualmie Pass clubs were already getting together on ski problems. The Rainier National Park Company planned to be open during the winter of 1943. Sid Gerber, a ski-equipment manufacturer, was going to knit all summer so there would be enough merchandise available for skiers. The Husky ski coach said Washington would have a powerhouse team next year, and they planned to send its team to meets by rail. “All in all, the ski experts agree it’s hard to tell just what will happen next year,

¹ By John W. Lundin, john@johnwlundin.com

² “Pacific Northwest Ski Association,” *American Ski Annual*, 1943, page 166, 171.

³ “Bowl Program, P.N.S.A. Focus on Youngsters,” & “Try the Small Hills First, Scussboomers’ Note: Control Important,” *Seattle Times*, November 12, 1941 (page 24).

but they are leaving no stone unturned in an effort to continue the sport.”⁴

In spite of the successful ski season in Washington, the war was looming and the upcoming season was uncertain, as described by the PNSA president.

Looking back upon our successful and complete ski season, and then trying to look forward to next season, I find myself in a quandary. It is hard to prophesy with any certainty that there will be any tournaments of major size, at least in the Northwest....The gas rationing edict may prevent large numbers of skiers from congregating here. Most of our skiing areas are accessible only by auto, and the railroads will not be able to handle increased loads to spots accessible by train. There will be some skiing, of course, skiers being what they are. The few gallons of gas doled out to car owners will be jealously hoarded for occasional trips, and there will be more joining of forces than ever before, but when it comes to tournaments, the aspect is gloomy.⁵

In December 1942, Sun Valley announced that it would close for the duration of the War on December 20. Hundreds of persons with reservations for the Christmas holidays were being notified. “Scarcity of help, shortage of food, fuel rationing and rail-traffic conservation were given as reasons.” The closure hit the U. of Washington ski team, that was forced to cancel its planned trip to Sun Valley to compete in an Intercollegiate ski meet over the holidays. It also forced 500 Seattle area skiers, who had reservations for Sun Valley for the holidays, to change their plans. The closure meant the end of three big-time ski meets planned there. The closure affected 625 Union Pacific employees, a ski-instructor staff of ten men headed by Otto Lang, and 1,000 skiers with reservations for the holiday.⁶

Webb Moffett described how the Snoqualmie Summit Ski area survived during WW II in spite of gas rationing.

With the outbreak of war in 1941, the future appeared rather dismal. Rainier was set aside for the training of mountain troops, Mt. Baker was closed for the duration, and, the most critical problem for everyone was gas rationing. The Tacoma people decided to bow out and sold the operations at Rainier, Mt. Baker, and Snoqualmie for \$3,500. Even the Milwaukee Bowl, which had been very popular by virtue of the ski trains, had to close down for lack of rolling stock. Curiously, it was gas rationing that saved Snoqualmie. People still wanted to ski and they could pool their five gallons of gas a week, jam-pack

⁴ “Skierita, Ski Clan Will Carry On, Let’s Keep ‘Em Flying,” by Rita Hume, *Seattle Times*, April 26, 1942 (page 8).

⁵ “Pacific Northwest Ski Association,” *American Ski Annual*, 1943, pages 169, 170.

⁶ “Sun Valley Closes for War’s Duration,” & “*Sun Valley Closure Hits U.W. Ski Plans*,” *Seattle Times*, December 8, 1942 (pages 24 & 30).

their cars, and drive the shorter distance to Snoqualmie. Business quadrupled the first year, and Snoqualmie grew with more and more rope tows.⁷

Conditions had changed dramatically by the winter of 1943. In December 1942, the Office of Defense Transportation ordered railroads not to run sports specials for the duration of the war. The Milwaukee Road decided not to operate its ski train or the Milwaukee Ski Bowl at Hyak during the upcoming season so it could commit its resources to the war effort, and the *Seattle Times* free ski lessons to Seattle high school students were canceled. The Times committed to start ski lessons again once the war was over.⁸

NORTHWEST WAS A MAJOR SITE FOR WAR ACTIVITIES

The Northwest was one of the major center for military activities in the country, and a large number of soldiers and sailors were stationed here during W.W. II. Not only did Fort Lewis play a critical role during W.W. II by training Army troops for combat, there were numerous Army, Navy and Coast Guard troops stationed in the Northwest throughout the war. Shipyards and Boeing Aircraft Company produced critically needed war machines. .

The state's 15 shipyards were busy building warships. Boeing turned out thousands of B-17 and B-29 bombers. Pacific Car and Foundry produced hundreds of Sherman tanks. And Hanford purified the plutonium for the atomic bombs dropped on Japan by B-17s... By 1945, Washington was the country's third-largest producer of aluminum.⁹

Washington was the site of a number of Army Supply Depots that stored huge amounts of war materiel that was shipped to front lines and to our allies.

During World War II a number of U.S. Army and Army Air Force supply depots were established in Washington state, and an existing army depot on the Seattle waterfront was greatly expanded. These depots played a critical role in supplying the war effort in Alaska and the Pacific and in transporting Lend Lease shipments to the Soviet Union. The Seattle depot became a port of embarkation for troops, with thousands leaving from there for combat and many of the survivors returning there at war's end...The depots in Washington delivered goods through the ports to resupply Alaska military bases and support the war in the Aleutian Islands. They also supported the war in the Pacific, shipping critical

⁷ Moffett, "A Brief History of Skiing in the Northwest," *Puget Soundings Magazine*, 1978.

⁸ "Times Free Ski School Called off for Duration," *Seattle Times*, December 29, 1942 (page 21).

⁹ Warren, James, "The War Years: A Chronicle of Washington State in World War II," *Washington State Magazine*, wsm.wsu.edu/index.

equipment and supplies to Hawaii and beyond.¹⁰

During the early stages of W.W. II, Army ski troops were stationed at Fort Lewis and used Mount Rainier for training, forming the “Ski Patrol Troops” of the 3d Division’s 15th Infantry Regiment. In late 1940, a few special “ski patrol” units within existing Army forces began training in Washington, and they trained in Washington State until they were transferred to Camp Hale in Colorado in 1943, when the Tenth Mountain Division was formed.

The Army permitted its ski troops to enter competitions where their skills could be tested against non-military skiers. In late March 1942, five Army skiers from Mount Rainier “stole the show” from college racers at the Pacific Northwest Intercollegiate Championships at Mount Rainier. A short stocky skier from Manchester, New Hampshire, private Charles McLane, was the best performer, beating U.W. skier Karl Neu by four seconds in the giant slalom. Another Army skier from New Hampshire won the downhill. Army skiers competed in their Army issue ski trooper clothes and white skis.

The Silver Skis race on Mt. Rainier was the last event of 1942. Army ski troops, who were described as “dangerous,” entered the race along with the cream of the crop of local racers. There were 54 entries, including seven from the “crack mountain troops.” The course was set by Lt. John Woodward. Seattle Ski Club veteran Matt Broze won the 3.16 mile race from Camp Muir to Edith Creek Basin in “near record time” of four minutes and 57 seconds, beating Walter Prager, Dartmouth College’s ski coach who was in the army. “The entire course was visible for the hundreds of spectators who lined the course. Shirley Macdonald of the Sun Valley Ski Club won the women’s race from Camp Muir to McClure Rock by nearly one minute. The 1942 Silver Skis race was the last held during the war - the race was not run again until 1946.”¹¹

MILITARY AND CIVILIANS ORGANIZE TO PROVIDE RECREATION FOR SERVICE MEMBERS

The government realized that recreation was an important issue for its service men and women, and providing facilities for off-duty activities was a major mission.

In 1942, an Army Recreation Camp was built at Jefferson Park in Seattle with a capacity for 1,000 people. It was designed to provide sleeping and eating facilities for service men who were on furlough, and served as a “clearing house” for civilian entertainment plans. It was built

¹⁰ Denfeld, Duane Colt, “Washington State Army Depots in World War II,” *Historylink Essay 10215*.

¹¹ Galvin, Dave, *Sahalie Historical Note #15*, “The Ski Troops of WWII”; “Army Skiers are Expert, Mountain Troops Outrace Colleges in Pacific NW’s Intercollegiate Championships,” by Lt. John Jay, *Seattle Times*, March 22, 1942 (page 6); “Days of Innocence, a training film for a non-existent unit,” *Skiing Heritage*, Fall 1995; “The Golden Years of John Jay,” *Skiing Heritage*, April 2001; “Army Entries in Silver Skis are Dangerous,” *Seattle Times*, April 5, 1942 (page 5); “Matt Broz Captures Silver Skis Classic,” *Seattle Times*, April 13, 1942 (page 19); Galvin, “Silver Skis Races,” *Sahalie Historical Note # 11*.

“with limited funds” by 53 soldiers and C.C.C workers at “a fraction of the total if built on a wartime construction basis.” It had 55 knotty pine and cedar cottages, 73 winterized tents, a large concession building with a bar, soda fountain, recreation hall, a women’s reception room, officers quarters, a large bathhouse, and sprawled on ten acres on the west side of the Jefferson Park Golf Course.

The center will perform a dual function: provide a “free hotel” for soldiers on liberty who are visiting in Seattle, and assist community and civic groups to provide entertainment for service men...While the recreation center will not actually provide entertainment for service men, it will be open to any civic organization which wishes to do so, and the recreation hall, containing a large dance floor and a portable stage, will be available for civilian sponsored functions.

Major Ralph J. Sitts of the Quartermaster Corps was in charge of the facility’s construction and operated it thereafter.

In 1943, the Army Recreation Center at Jefferson Park was called “the outstanding camp of its kind in the United States.” The people of Seattle “have gone out of its way helping to establish it,” and through the Seattle War Chest, they contributed “a considerable sum of money to complete the necessary buildings...The usefulness of the camp has since far more than justified that expenditure.” The enterprise and ingenuity of Major Sitts was responsible for “much of the center’s effectiveness.”¹²

¹² “Army Recreation Hall Built With Economy and Energy,” *Seattle Times*, May 2, 1942 (page 3); “Good Job on Both Sides, *Seattle Times*, March 24, 1943 (page 6).

WORK SPEEDED ON ARMY RECREATION CAMP



Although work was begun less than two months ago, this large Army recreation center already is 60 per cent complete and will be ready to receive half of its 1,000-man capacity by May 15. Free to service men, it will provide sleeping and eating facilities for them while on furlough and will serve as a "clearing house" for civilian entertainment plans. The camp is in Jefferson Park.

Army Recreation Hall Built With Economy and Energy

Establishing somewhat of a building record, 53 soldiers and C. C. C. boys today were rushing work on a huge Army recreation camp in Jefferson Park, and already have completed 60 per cent of their task, despite limited funds and time.

The recreation center, at 15th Avenue South and Dakota Street, is on Park Department property. For service men visiting Seattle on furlough, it will provide quarters for 1,000 at a time.

In charge of the construction work is Maj. Ralph J. Sitts, Quartermaster Corps.

Work Done Rapidly

Although work was begun less than two months ago, the camp will be opened to operate at half capacity May 15, Major Sitts said.

Sprawling out over approximately ten acres on the west side of the Jefferson Park Golf Course, the camp will contain 55 knotty pine and cedar cottages, 73 winterized tents, a large concession building with a bar, soda fountain, recreation hall and women's reception

room; officers' quarters, and a large bathhouse.

It is the second of its kind to be built in the West. A similar camp was built recently at Santa Monica.

Limited funds allotted by the War Department provided for materials only, Major Sitts said. Thirty C. C. C. youths and 23 service men are building the camp.

The center will perform a dual function: provide a free "hotel" for soldiers on liberty who are visiting in Seattle, and assist community and civic groups to provide entertainment for service men.

Reception Center Provided

The latter function, Major Sitts said, will also include provision of a communication center to enable soldiers to make appointments with wives, relatives or friends, and a reception center for civilians visiting the camp on such appointments.

While the recreation center will not actually provide entertainment for service men, it will be open to any civic organization which wishes to do so, and the recreation hall, containing a large dance floor and a portable stage, will be available for civilian sponsored functions.



Boss of construction, being done by 30 C. C. C. youths and 23 soldiers, is Maj. Ralph J. Sitts, Quartermaster Corps. Working with limited War Department funds, which provide for materials only, it has been Major Sitts' job to make every penny count. When completed, the center's cost will be only a fraction of the total if built on a wartime construction basis.

POLICE PHONES IN ORDER AGAIN

Police Department telephones were back in operation today after a hectic few hours yesterday afternoon, during which headquarters had little or no wire communication with the outside world.

Fire in a manhole outside the Public Safety Building burned a telephone cable and water tele-

EXPORT PRICE RULE CLARIFIED

The new maximum export price regulation affects exports to Alaska and other territories "despite language of the regulation stating that an export sale "is a sale of any commodity or product for export to any place outside the territorial limits of the United States."

By The Associated Press

Seattle Times, May 2, 1942 (page 3)

SAHALIE SKI CLUB PROVIDES SKIING OPPORTUNITIES TO SERVICE MEN

Given the number of soldiers and sailors who were stationed in Western Washington during W, W, II, the Pacific Northwest Ski Association and local ski clubs organized to provide access to skiing for military personnel. Sahalie Ski Club led the efforts by bringing service men to their lodge on Snoqualmie Pass on weekends and teaching them the sport.

Local ski clubs hosted a Sports Dance in early February 1943, “at which both service men and civilians will mingle.” The host clubs include Sahalie, the Penguins, Mountaineers, Sno Owls and Washington Alpine, and Seattle Ski Club. In addition, the “natural-color” ski movie, *Ski Patrol*” filmed by Lt. John Jay was exhibited in early February 1942 at Meany Hall on the University of Washington campus. The movie detailed the work of the Army mountain troops.

The PNSA supported skiing programs for servicemen in 1943, in which it said, “Sahalie has taken the lead.” Sahalie housed as many service skiers as could come to the Summit, but there were not enough cars to transport everyone who wanted to participate, so the public was called on to help. Most of the servicemen who went to Sahalie had never skied or seen snow before. Another skiing opportunity was available to service members at the Jefferson Park Recreation Camp in Seattle, during the occasional times when there was enough snow on the ground on which to ski. Service men could be outfitted with ski equipment there at no charge. “The skiing, on hills adjacent to the camp, is under the supervision of camp officers and will continue as long as snow remains.”

A soldier-civilian ski party was held at Snoqualmie Summit on Wednesday February 10, 1943, where soldiers from McChord Field and the Jefferson Park Recreation Center could ride the Summit tow that would operate for the event.

Fifty officers and enlisted men from McCord Field in Tacoma and a like number from the Seattle Jefferson Park Recreation Center will travel by bus to the Snoqualmie Summit Tuesday to prepare for the festivities...On Wednesday, both soldiers and civilians can take advantage of the ski tow which will be operated through the cooperation of the owners.

A plea was made to civilian skiers to include soldiers in their skiing plans the rest of the season.

While the Jefferson Park Center is able to send two bus loads of service skiers to the Summit every week-end, that doesn’t begin to take care of the demand from the fighting men. If you are planning a ski trip and have an empty seat or two in your car, call Major Ralph Sitts, head of the Center...or the Seattle Times sports desk and a service skier will be assigned to your car. Also, the Center can use many more contributions of ski equipment, particularly boots. The 100 outfits now available don’t begin to outfit all the soldiers and sailors who want to go skiing.

On February 7, the *Seattle Times* reported that 100 service men completed arrangements for their “ski fling” at “Snoqualmie Summit this week.” That group would travel to Snoqualmie Summit on Tuesday to prepare for the ski day on Wednesday. Civilian skiers were also invited to “take advantage of the tow that day.” The Jefferson Park Center was still trying to obtain more ski rides and equipment. Skiers were invited to take military personnel with them on ski trips if

they had room in their cars, and were asked to donate ski equipment to the Center.¹³

SOLDIERS SET MID-WEEK SNOQUALMIE SKI PARTY



SOLDIER SKIERS RIDE BUS TO SNOQUALMIE SUMMIT
(Left to right) Pfc. Frank Brunson Technicians Bob Leimbach, and Ardino Orsi,
Corp. George Hillman

Seattle Times, January 31, 1943 (page 7)

During the winter of 1943, Sahalie hosted military personnel at its lodge on many weekend, and provided ski lessons to them. On Sunday, February 14, 1943, the *Seattle Times* reported that

Sahalie Ski Club, which quietly has been playing an important role in making skiing possible for service men in the Seattle area, will host another Uncle Sam contingent

¹³ "Soldiers Set Mid-Week Snoqualmie Ski Party," *Seattle Times*, January 31, 1943 (page 7); "Prep Ski Meet Being Planned for Snoqualmie," *Seattle Times*, February 7, 1943 (page 7).

today. Forty-five Navy and Anti-Aircraft skiers will be guests of the club at its Snoqualmie lodge. Sixty-five took advantage of that same hospitality last week.

On the last weekend of February, 1943, Sahalie,

which has been host to more than 200 service men at Snoqualmie Summit this season, will open its lodge to 25 Fort Lawton soldiers today. Many of the service men have never had skis on, but that won't make much difference because the Sahalie program today calls for an obstacle race in which the competitors will ski on everything from barrel staves to ice skates. Conditions at the Summit "are perfect."

Pacific Northwest Ski Association officials met in early March 1943, "to discuss furthering of the service skiing program in which Sahalie had taken the lead."

It's Sahalie's policy to house as many service skiers as can come to the Summit... However, we don't have enough cars to handle the transportation of all the service men who want to make the trips. Any help other skiers can give us on this will be greatly appreciated. Most of the service men who are guests of Sahalie have never had skis on before, and many seen snow.

In early March, 19 Seattle area clubs sponsored a Victory Fair at the Jefferson Park Recreational Camp for service men, which was also open to the public. Six orchestras would provide music for dancing, with special dance acts, along with wrestling and boxing exhibitions and a roller-skating show. Carnival booths would use artificial money for dice games, penny pitch, dart and nail-driving games, bingo, roulette and ball games. There would be an archery court and a fish pond, "and girls in costumes will man all booths, as well as act as partners for dancing." Sahalie Ski Club was one of the sponsors along with a number of Seattle area service organizations.

Sahalie continued its normal ski activities during the war as best it could. The ski club held a dance at the Sand Point Country Club in late February 1943, to raise funds to clear trees behind their clubhouse. The prior weekend, Sahalie hosted 35 service men from all parts of the country, many of whom had never skied before.

Sahalie held its club championships at the Summit on February 21, 1943, with downhill and slalom races for both men and women. Gus Eriksen, coach of the University of Washington lightweight crew, was chairman of the event. Ski conditions on the Pass were the best they had been in ten years, with a 12 or 13 foot base with a covering of powder snow. Randall Zimmer and Howard Miller tied for combined honors but the cup went to Zimmer under the rules on the basis of his downhill run. Betty Malone won the women's combined crown.

Sahalie sponsored the PNSA's annual women's and junior tournament on the last weekend of March 1943, with downhill and slalom races. Thirteen women "snow riders" and 30

juniors entered. The same weekend, a Ski Jumping Exhibition hosted by the Seattle Ski Club was held at Beaver Lake on the Summit. Proceeds from both events would be donated to the Army Recreation Camp in Seattle. Transportation and equipment would be arranged for servicemen. Olav Ulland “soared 211 and 213 feet from the takeoff at Snoqualmie Pass yesterday to smash the Beaver Lake jumps record and take the honors in a ski tourney staged for the benefit of service men in the Seattle area.” Ulland beat the record set by Alf Engen several years before. The big thrill of the event was the “sensational” 217 foot jump made by Ray Hendrickson, a youth from Leavenworth, who fell on the landing so it did not count as a new record. Bill Healy of the Multnomah Athletic Club of Portland, finished first in the slalom and second in the downhill to win the Northwest Junior Combined Championship. Alma Hansen of the Cascade Ski Club won the women’s combined title.¹⁴

Two ski lodges on Snoqualmie Pass burned down during the war, the Sahalie Ski Club lodge in 1943, and the Mountaineers Lodge in 1944.

On April 16th 1943, the four story Sahalie Ski Club lodge at Snoqualmie Pass burned to the ground, the result of defective wiring on the fourth floor - the club had its own electrical system. The fire was discovered by five youths who had hiked to the lodge to ski. They were able to reach the lodge in time to save “much of its furnishings, including skis, sleeping bags, tables and desks and the juke box.” They were assisted by Larry Hamilton, the lodge’s caretaker, who was working on the building’s water supply system a short distance away when the fire started.” The lodge had sleeping accommodations for 85. “During the winter it had been used for many ski parties for service men, and plans were to have it for a service men’s recreation camp in the summer.” Sahalie Ski Club was recognized by the military as having done more than any other organization to give soldiers a taste of skiing in the Northwest. Sahalie’s president said he did not know whether the lodge would be rebuilt at the present time. The loss was estimated at \$20,000, and the club had \$5,000 of insurance.¹⁵

¹⁴ *Skiers Invited to Park Slide*, Seattle Times, January 25, 1943 (page 5), *Ski Party February 10*, Seattle Times, February 2, 1943 (page 18); “Ski Stars Jump Today,” *Seattle Times*, February 14, 1943 (page 5); *Ski Club to Give Dance Friday Night*, Seattle Times, February 22, 1943 (page 7); “Preps to Ski Today, Hostmark in Army,” *Seattle Times*, February 28, 1943 (page 7); “Ski Meet on Today,” *Seattle Times*, March 28, 1943 (page 6); “Service Men to be ‘Fair’ Guests,” *Seattle Times*, March 7, 1943 (page 8); “Junior Skiers to Vie Sunday,” *Seattle Times*, March 21, 1943 (page 5); “Ulland Cracks Jumping Mark at Snoqualmie,” *Seattle Times*, March 29, 1943 (page 14).

¹⁵ *Fire Destroys Pass Ski Lodge*, Seattle Times, April 17, 1943 (page 5); *Weide Elected Sahalie Prexy*, Seattle Times April 10, 1943 (page 8); .

MOUNTAIN CLUB BURNS



Smoke and flames pour from the roof of the Sahalie Ski Club Lodge at Snoqualmie Pass after a short circuit in the electric wiring set fire to the four-story frame building last night. The lodge was totally destroyed. Loss was estimated at \$20,000. Mrs. Kenneth T. Lynch of Bothell, returning to her home from Wapato, took the above picture. (See Page 5 for additional details.)

Seattle Times, April 2, 1944 (page 31)

Efforts to give soldiers and sailors access to skiing continued in 1944. The loss of the Sahalie Lodge meant that the club's hill could no longer be used to host service men who wanted to ski, so the Seattle Ski Club hill at Snoqualmie Summit was put into use. In April 1944, the *Seattle Times* printed a picture of Major and Mrs. Sitts at the Seattle Ski Club, which was then only open to service men. Major Sitts was in charge of the U.S. Army Recreation Camp at Jefferson Park, which had 160 sets of equipment "and toggery" that had been donated by Seattleites for use by service men and women. Each weekend, the equipment was used by large

groups who wanted to go skiing. Service members were conveyed to the Snoqualmie Pass on Army trucks.



Although civilian Seattle ski enthusiasts can't pursue their favorite sport in wartime, the Army has seen to it that service men and women in the Northwest enjoy the sport. The program has been in charge of Maj. Ralph J. Sitts, company commander of the U. S. Army Recreation Camp at Jefferson Park. The camp has 160 complete sets of equipment and toggery, donated by Seattleites, and each week-end this winter has outfitted large groups who want to go skiing. Here Major and Mrs. Sitts stand by the sign at Snoqualmie Pass pointing to the Seattle Ski Club, now open only for the military. Service men and women are convoyed there in Army trucks. The Sittses are both enthusiastic skiers. After convalescing over a year from a ski accident, Mrs. Sitts recently again took up the sport. The popular Army officer and his wife, natives of Walla Walla, came to Seattle from San Francisco, where their son and daughter are now attending school.—Official U. S. Army photo.

Seattle Times, April 2, 1944 (page 31)

The *American Ski Annual, 1944*, reported that the last event the ski season of 1944, was a benefit for the athletic fund of the U.S. Army Recreation Camp at Jefferson Park in Seattle, hosted by the Seattle and Sahalie Ski Clubs. Recreational skiing had been confined to Stevens Pass, Snoqualmie Pass and Mt. Spokane during the war. Mt. Baker and Paradise were closed for the war, Sahalie's Lodge on Snoqualmie Pass burned down, and the roof of the Cascade Ski Club Lodge at Mt. Hood collapsed under heavy snow. Much valuable equipment was lost in both locations, but no one was hurt. Servicemen were able to ski as the military took over several hills on the weekends. The U.S.O. took skiers from Tacoma to Mt. Rainier and the U.S. Army Recreation Camp ran regular trips to Snoqualmie. The Penguin Ski Club of Seattle and the Tacoma Ski Club collected old ski equipment for the use of the servicemen.

Major Sitts, who had been responsible for organizing the military's activities at the Army Recreation Camp at Jefferson Park in Seattle, was reassigned to an Army camp in California later in April 1944. Sitts had built the Jefferson Park facility "into the largest of its kind operated by the Army."¹⁶

In August 1944, the Seattle Ski Club met to plan for the ski season of 1945. "As was done last year, the club again will cooperate to the fullest extent with the Army."

The military also competed in other events and elsewhere as well. In January 1943, a "ten-round smoker" or boxing tournament was held at the Sand Point Gymnasium, where Seattle's two major teams representing Naval Air Station and the Pier 41 Naval Station faced off against each other. In March 1945, "the Coast Guard made a virtual sweep" at a Service Skiing Tournament held on Stevens Pass. Coast Guard skiers won the Men's Open Slalom, followed by racers from the Merchant Marine, Navy, Coast Guard, and the Navy. The Coast Guard won first and second in the Men's Novice Slalom, followed by three Navy skiers. The Coast Guard also took first and third in the Women's Open Slalom, and the won the top five places in the Women's Novice Slalom.¹⁷

¹⁶ "Skiing in Western Washington - 1944," *American Ski Annual*, http://hyak.net/lost/skiing_1944.html; "Sitts Ordered to Camp Hahn," *Seattle Times*, April 12, 1944 (page 5).

¹⁷ *Seattle Ski Club to Meet Thursday*, *Seattle Times*, August 13, 1944 (page 18); "Two Naval Stations To Settle Ring Feud," *Seattle Times*, January 10, 1943 (page 8); "Coast Guard Skiers Sweep," *Seattle Times*, March 5, 1944 (page 11).