

Austrians in the 10th US Mountain Division

“My job will be rock climbing...” – Short digital biographies and database of Austrian exiles in the 10th US Mountain Division of World War II.

During World War II, the so-called 10th Mountain Division was not just the only large unit of the US land forces specializing in mountain combat and winter operations. This infantry force was hastily created during the war, semi-elitist and became militarily successful towards the end of the Italian campaign in 1945. It was also a catchment area for exiled Austrians and “1938” refugees, including dozens of winter sports enthusiasts and mountaineers. The upheavals of their time, triggered by war and National Socialism, were to drive the latter to Camp Hale, a barracks camp at around 2.800 meters in the Rocky Mountains of Colorado. This unusual place was now the “home base” of the new US mountain warriors. All names and basic biographical data of the estimated 200 Austrians (most of whom fled after 1938) in this sociologically and culturally special unit are identified and documented in a database. Additionally, short exile or war biographies of all affected persons are written, as well as a historical essay supplemented with cultural studies perspectives. The results and findings of the research will be published in German and English on the [BIK website](#) and will be available for free. The contemporary media depiction of the destinies and life stories of this particular group of people, who combined anti-fascism with alpinism, should on the one hand, anchor the latter in the historical memory of the Republic of Austria and on the other hand, help to network this research with the extremely vital US American discourse in this field. The biographical online project on Austrian US mountain soldiers in exile is funded by the **National Fund of the Republic of Austria for Victims of National Socialism** and the **Future Fund of the Republic of Austria**. In addition, it is being carried out at the Ludwig Boltzmann Institute for Research on the Consequences of War. The **Austrian-American Partnership Fund** supports the transatlantic dissemination of the project via the public outreach initiative: *“So it was that we trained in this valley shrouded with smoke”*: *Shifting Perspectives on Mountains, Wars, and Recreational Businesses*. The **Center for Inter-American Studies** at the University of Graz is a cooperation partner (Project Management: Florian Traussnig, Project Staff: Robert Lackner; Research Students: Tabita Pflieger & Theresa Reinalter).



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