



Angela Linn [REDACTED] >

Enquiry and some assistance please guys

John Looney [REDACTED]
To: Angela Linn [REDACTED] >

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Hi Angela

It was worth me asking anyway as I'll probably never see a third parka like this, I fully appreciate what you are saying.

This is what I know

The particular parka I was interested in was a prototype developed for the possible invasion of the Russians into Alaska and also for use in the Korean War. It dates 1946/47 to very early 1948

I have one virtually the same here and a couple of others very similar.

This is the history behind them

As you will be aware the military had just finished a war in Europe in 1945 and the climate they fought in was generally mild and temperate.

As a result, when the Korean crisis first escalated, more troops were tragically lost to the elements than in battle in the first few months, it was that cold and the military were not prepared to fight in such climates.

As such a desperate race was on to develop a cold weather system that a soldier could fight and survive in.

New parkas were developed from the existing WW2 dated m43 "pullover" parkas used by the 10th division in Alaska, they evolved into the fishtail parka.

Initially modified with a zipper retro fitted straight up the front and then with the inclusion of a sleeve pocket and the classic fish tails, that could be pulled up under the legs and fixed with the drawstrings for additional warmth.

This parka was one of the very first prototypes, was light, warm and was very successful. (the one I enquired about) it has a quilted fibreglass liner.

But the U.S. army were reluctant to foot the cost for the expensive chemicals to produce (the then) modern nylon to mass produce these parkas.

They also had massive stockpiles of cotton and wool left over from ww2 to use up.

So the production version of this prototype was a heavy cotton and wool based version called the M1948 fishtail parka.

Consisting of a wool pile liner and outer shell with fur fixed to the shell hood.

This parka was well made and very very expensive to mass produce, so a revision was made and in 1951 the M1951 parka was born, a cheaper three piece fishtail parka, with detachable hood liner and chest liner.

This again was made from cotton and wool and was heavy, so a year later a revision was made in a lighter weight poplin nylon/cotton mix shell with a terry towelling liner which was a fraction of the weight and more crucially didn't rot when continuously wet and dried more quickly.

About the wearer.

The particular parka I asked about you have was owned by Major William D. Hackett.

He was part of the 10th division and as such would have had access to the newest prototype cold weather

parkas of the day back in 1947/8.

Not just because he was a Major but also because he would have been involved in testing this new kit.

As they were the very latest and best parkas of the time, only the highest ranking people generally got one and those actually doing the testing of them.

Major Hackett was a very special guy who lived an extraordinary life and he could have commanded one of these parkas and clearly he certainly did.

WILLIAM D. HACKETT 1918–1999

Bill Hackett died in Portland from complications following heart surgery. Bill had a distinguished military career, a successful business career and a lifelong career of worldwide mountaineering, skiing, travel, and exploration. He combined his careers in interesting and fruitful ways. Growing up in Portland, OR, he began climbing at age 14. By age 22, when he entered the U.S. Army, he had made 50 ascents of Mt. Hood by 11 different routes, including three first ascents and two second ascents. In the Army in WWII, he served more than three years in the 10th Mountain Division, first as an instructor and then as a combat infantry unit commander in the Appenines and the Julian Alps.

He was promoted to First Lieutenant of Infantry and awarded the Combat Infantry Badge, two Bronze Stars and the Silver Star for gallantry in action. After WWII, he remained in regular Army for 21 years.

He served as an intelligence officer in Korea and in Vietnam.

Following WWII, he served four years as a research and development field test officer for equipment and clothing. In that duty, he made many cold-weather ascents in Canada and Alaska, and his efforts helped in the improvement of various cold-weather gear (e.g., streamlining the arctic uniform from 23 to 14 pounds.)

Bill served as chief of training at the Mountain and Cold Weather Training Command at Fort Carson, CO, and as environmental training general staff officer at Fort Monroe, VA. He also served in Europe in a variety of posts. In 1963, with the rank of major, he took a disability retirement.

After leaving the Army, he returned to Portland and formed the Bill Hackett Company, a sporting goods manufacturers' representative organization. This proved to be a successful enterprise.

Bill made many ascents in the Cascades, Colorado, Canada, Mexico and the Alps. In five expeditions to Mt. McKinley, he ascended the South Peak four times and the North Peak twice, making first ascents of the West Buttress from Kahlitna Glacier and the Northwest Buttress via Peters Glacier.

Two of these expeditions, with Bradford Washburn, accomplished survey work that fixed the elevation of the summit at 20,320 feet.

Bill Hackett was the first person to reach the summits of both McKinley and Logan. He was the first American to climb Aconcagua and the first American to climb Mt. Kenya. He was the first person to reach the summits of five continents.

In 1960, he organized and led an American-German expedition to K2 that reached 25,000 feet. In 1985, at age 67, he joined a Canadian-American expedition to Antarctica to climb Mt. Vinson.

Miscellaneous travel included trips to both the North and South Poles, two journeys around the world and a voyage on a Russian icebreaker. Miscellaneous honors include the Army Commendation Medal for meritorious achievement in the field of expeditionary mountaineering.

The foregoing is only a brief summary of a rich life.

A full-length biography is currently being written by June Hackett and Thorn Bacon.

The title is Climb to Glory and publication was set for Fall, 2000, so may well be in print now.

I hope this is of some help to you, I can supply photographs of mint examples of every different model of

fishtail parka ever made, including many of the prototypes developed along the way if you need them.
Just ask

Please get in touch if I can be of any further assistance.

Regards

John

Sent from my iPad

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