

Founding chapter of Disabled Sports USA celebrates 50 years



Achieve Tahoe started as a way to get wounded veterans, mainly amputees, out on the slopes. Photo/Provided

By Ally Gravina, Moonshine Ink

Achieve Tahoe, formerly Disabled Sports USA Far West, was founded 50 years ago by the late Jim Winthers, a World War II veteran of the 10th Mountain Division and director of the Soda Springs Ski School.

To recruit participants, Winthers and other vets would walk around Letterman Army Hospital in San Francisco talking to wounded Vietnam soldiers, mainly amputees, about coming up to Tahoe to ski.

Doug Pringle, who would later become one of the founding members of the organization, was apprehensive the first time he saw the WWII guys walk through his ward at Letterman. A West Point graduate who lost a leg in Vietnam, Pringle had skied only once before his injury. He described his time

skiing with two legs as falling down the entire mountain, and he thought the WWII guys were crazy to talk about skiing on only one leg.

Declining the first offer to go to Tahoe, Pringle quickly changed his mind after his fellow hospital mates returned after a weekend of skiing saying they not only made turns, but also hung out at the bar with a bunch of beautiful women.

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