

Numerous winter routes of good quality have been done elsewhere throughout the Northern Highlands, and the above is a selection of some of the more outstanding. Also worth mentioning in passing were ascents of low-level frozen waterfalls, e.g. on Beinn a'Mhuinnidh, where The Waterfall (V) was climbed by Nisbet and Thornhill at the end of January, and on Carn a'Bhorain where the Fain Falls (IV) takes an impressive ice-fall in three pitches; first ascent by B. Findlay, S. Kennedy, R. Ross and G. Strange, also in January 1984.

The presently confused situation regarding routes in the Northern Highlands (no new phenomenon, and applying to locals and visitors with equal force) is due to several factors; geography, poor descriptions, and attempts to rationalise the pace and quality of exploration being some of them. A new guidebook is in preparation which should eventually help rescue some worthwhile climbs from obscurity.

Poland

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The year of 1984 was the 75th anniversary of the Polish mountain rescue service. Mariusz Zaruski (1867-1941) created the Tatra Mountains Volunteer Rescue Service (TOPR). He was a many-sided man, alpinist and skier, a soldier and organiser of Polish yachting in the inter-war period. Although the idea of the mountain rescue service was raised earlier, the TOPR's statute was not accepted and signed until 29 October 1909. The death in an avalanche in spring 1909 of another alpinist, skier and composer, M. Karłowicz, probably had a decisive influence on this event.

Up to 1939 the TOPR consisted of about 50 rescuers, highlanders mainly, but they operated in the Tatra Mountains only. The organization, TOPR, was associated with the Polish Tatra Association (PTT), as the Rescue Section of the PTT, and after the Second World War, up to 1978, also with the Polish Tourist Association (PTTK). In the 1939-45 war, the Germans ordered the members of the TOPR to continue their work as the Tatra-Bergwacht. This organization became a link of the anti-Nazi national movement and took part in smuggling Resistance couriers and others through the mountains out of occupied Poland.

In 1952 the rescue service was spread to the other Polish mountains; from then on it was called the Mountain Volunteer Rescue Service (GOPR). Today there are six regional groups of the GOPR working, besides the Tatra Mountains, in the Sudety, Beskidy and Bieszczady Mountains. The GOPR's main stations are in such towns as Zakopane, Jelenia Góra, Walbrzych, Bielsko, Rabka, Krynica and Sanok. There are 1700 rescuers in GOPR today; a hundred of them professionals. The Tatra Group comprises 300 men; 25 of them are professionals. Because of the high mountain character, the rescuers of the Tatra Group are specially trained for alpine and cave climbing actions.

Lately, the rescuers of the GOPR have been called to approximately 7000 cases a year and they organised 250 rescue operations, 160 of which took place in the Tatra Mountains; some 20% of these accidents concerned climbers. The GOPR transports downhill about 1400 injured skiers and carries about 20 death casualties a year.

Since its foundation, the presidents of the TOPR and GOPR have been; M. Zaruski, J. Oppenheim, Z. Korosadowicz, W. H. Paryski, W. Gasienica-Wawrytko, T. Pawlowski, J. Cybulski, K. Tomillo and, since 1973, J. Komornicki. The leaders of the Tatra group from the beginning of the GOPR have been: Z. Wójcik, E. Strzeboński, M. Gajewski, R. Dragowski, M. Jagiello, T. Ewy, S. Janik, R. Szafirski, J. Komornicki and S. Lukaszczyk-Zbójnik.

The mountain rescuer oath, introduced 75 years ago by M. Zaruski, is still valid today. The highlander-rescuer Klimek Bachleda, who was killed during one of the first actions of the TOPR in 1910, became a symbol of the rescuer's self-sacrifice.

