

Ludwig Rabina

Born Ludovit Rabina known as Ludwig (Ludo or Luddie to his friends). He was one of many who escaped from Slovakia after the Second World War. He worked against the rise of communism in the underground movement as a courier, taking documents and people across the Austrian border to freedom. He was warned to flee for his life and arrived in Australia in 1950 as a refugee.

Reminding him of home he found Thredbo and commenced working there in 1961 digging the foundations of the Alpine Hotel and in 1962 started his employment with Kosciuszko Thredbo as a chairlift operator.

In 1963 KT appointed Luddie to take over and formalize the ski patrol and he became the first paid patroller and in 1964 incorporated the volunteer patrol. He was responsible for recruitment, conducting rescues and mountain safety. 1969 he recruited paid professional patrollers. He served as the Volunteer patrol's treasurer for 4 years and president for 9. He was employed as Slopes Manager then Mountain manager, supervising ski trail cutting, slope grooming, race management and PR. He gathered weather and snow data for the Bureau of Meteorology, reporting on New South Wales and Victorian radio.

Ludo was an outdoorsman who enjoyed trout fishing, walking and nature. In summer he enjoyed taking visitors on walking tours up Mt Kosciuszko and Dead Horse gap. Nobody did the trek from Eagles Nest to the summit of Kosciuszko more often than him: he did it hundreds of times, including on cross country skis. He regularly participated in the winter cross country ski race from Thredbo to Perisher. Not surprisingly he came to know the mountains and their flora and fauna intimately.

An experience mountaineer, he and then wife Sharonne trekked twice to Everest base camp and climbed several mountains in the Himalayas.

An athlete of supreme fitness, Luddie regularly ran the City to Surf in Sydney. He was honoured as 'The founder of Mountain running in the Snowy Mountains' In 1976 he initiated the **Kosciuszko Classic** – a 12km race from Eagles Nest to Mt. Kosciuszko return as well as the **Crackenback Challenge** a gruelling 2km climb of 600 vertical metres from Valley Terminal to Eagles Nest.

He was charismatic and popular, ever loved by the many he came in contact with. He was mourned in Thredbo and elsewhere when he died in 2007, having returned to his native Slovakia a few years before. His 30 year contribution to Thredbo was considerable, and the place was the better for his involvement.