

the other four injured. The expedition was abandoned. The Cumbrian expedition had established their Base Camp alongside the other on March 19, but fortunately had delayed making their Advance Base because of doubt about their route. The large Bulgarian expedition on the Nepalese side was already on the west ridge. The Cumbrians were deciding what to do when the avalanche fell. After helping to evacuate the injured climbers, they changed their objective, on April 10, to the route attempted by Lou Whittaker's 1982 expedition to the left of the Great Couloir of the north face. They established Camp IV at 25,500 feet on April 20 but were forced to retire because of the weather. They returned on May 1, but Gunson suffered a heart attack at 23,000 feet. They succeeded in evacuating him but decided to abandon the expedition.

CHRISTIAN BONINGTON

*Everest via the Great Couloir.* Our climbing team of Lincoln Hall, Andrew Henderson, Greg Mortimer, Tim Macartney-Snape and me as leader was joined by a four-man film crew and two Nepali assistants. We felt totally intimidated by the huge 3000-metre face when we arrived at Base Camp at 5200 metres on August 2. Late monsoon snows had plastered the face and fresh snow fell regularly as we established and stocked Advance Base at 5500 metres and then Camp I at 5800 metres on August 21. The avalanche danger was extreme and we decided on a direct route on the face, believing it to be the safest and fastest—both obviously advantageous to our small team. It was also a new route. An early attempt to place Camp II at 6600 metres was lost in an avalanche. This was a setback as a lot of gear was never found. However, we waited for a spell of good weather and pushed the fixed ropes higher. On September 14 we found an ideal location for Camp II at 6900 metres and dug a snow cave there. Ropes were fixed above Camp II across vast open slabs covered by unstable snow to 7400 metres. That was the end of the fixed rope. Then a period of bad weather followed. We waited this out at Camp I and then decided on a summit attempt. We travelled light realizing we could make only one summit try. At 7400 metres I retreated with symptoms of cerebral oedema. The other four continued on and placed Camp III at 7500 metres, just on entering the Great Couloir. On October 2 they continued up the couloir to Camp IV at 8150 metres, where they spent an uncomfortable night in a single dome tent. The next day, October 3, all four set out for the summit. Hall turned back early due to the extreme cold. The remaining three left the Great Couloir to the right over difficult mixed ground. Progress without oxygen was very slow but finally Tim Macartney-Snape and Greg Mortimer stood on the summit. They remained for 20 minutes, filming and making a tape recording and then descended into the approaching night. They met Henderson only 50 vertical metres from the summit and he descended with them. At three A.M. they reached Camp IV. The next two days of descent were slow and dangerous. Mortimer had acute exhaustion and Henderson's hands were badly frostbitten. On October 6 everyone was safely at Base Camp.

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