

started the crossing on November 15. Sir Randolph Twistleton-Wykeman-Fiennes dropped out in mid-December with kidney stones; Marek Kaminski of Poland reached the South Pole on January 14, but decided to discontinue his solo trans-Antarctic expedition three days later for undisclosed reasons. The status of South Korean Hoe Young-ho was unknown. (*Expedition News* February 1997)

*Mount Vinson, New Route.* Slovenian alpinists Groselj, Klemenc, Voduaek, and Stipe Boi from Croatia climbed a new route on the south face of Mount Vinson. We set up our tent on the Branscomb Glacier in the Adventure Network Agency Base at 2150 meters between January 3 and 4. After 12 hours we reached the edge of the face (4700 meters) through the right big couloir, well seen from the base. We reached the top of Mt. Vinson at 10. a.m. on January 5 via the west ridge. Groselj skied from the top via the west face after a later start over the glacier to Camp III, then to the Base via the normal ascent. Boi, Klemenc and Voduaek crossed the ridge from the summit onward and then over the glacier in connection with the normal route (CIII). At 8 p.m. they returned to Base Camp after 32 hours of walking and climbing. The Slovenian Route is a nice, classical snow route of 45 to 55° and 2500 meters high. The weather and snow conditions were unexpectedly excellent; the temperature on the summit was -35° C.

Some days later we ascended six summits from 2300 to 2900 meters from Base Camp, making ski descends from all of them several times in perfect ski conditions. When we returned to the Patriot Hills we succeeded in making several ski tours there.

STANE KLEMENC, *Planinska zveza Slovenija*

*Mount Viets and 4811, Ascents.* French alpinists Erik Decamp and Catherine Destivelle made two first ascents in Antarctica. A full account of their climbs appears earlier in this journal.

*Rondspiret, First Ascent.* The Sør-Rondane 1996-97 expedition returned from Antarctica on January 20 after a successful first ascent of Rondspiret (The Ronde Spire), with an altitude of almost 8,000 feet. Ivar Tollefsen organized and led the expedition, as he did the Queen Maud Land expedition in 1994. Robert Caspersen, Hkon Staver and Aslak Aastorp made up the rest of the climbing team. Tina Jorgensen joined as back-up climber and Miss Fix-it, Nils Lund as film photographer and producer, Per Brustad as technician, and Vebjorn Sand as expedition painter.

Discovered by Viggo Widere February 6, 1937, Rondane is an independent mountain massif in Queen Maud Land. Rondspiret is not the highest mountain in the area, but is without doubt the most impressive peak. With its needle shape, extreme location and wall heights of 2,500 to 3,500 feet, most mountains pale in comparison. I have climbed Cerro Torre, stood at the foot of Trango Tower, and flown past Ulvetanna, but when we approached Rondspiret, I felt queasy and had to look down. The mountain was awesome—steeper than anything I had ever seen. With co-ordinates at roughly 72 degrees south and 26 degrees east, Rondspiret is located approximately 350 miles east of Ulvetanna and 125 miles inland. The area is extremely exposed to wind and everything appears to have been sand-blasted. Virtually no snow, polished surfaces, zero vegetation, and only the odd bird alighting briefly before flying on. In 1994, the transportation in to the Ulvetanna base camp had involved Russian ice-breakers, rusty helicopters and obsolete snowmobiles. This time around everything was much simpler. Three flights put us at the foot of the mountain. But it was expensive. Adventure Network doesn't offer excursion fares.

ASLAK AASTORP, *Norway*