

Harry was one of the founders and prime movers of the Los Alamos Mountaineers, organizing and leading instructional courses and technical climbs for the club. He also participated in some of the summer outings organized by the Alpine Club of Canada and there met the Swiss guide, Eddie Petrig. Subsequently, Harry did a number of long classic Zermatt climbs with Eddie, including the Marinelli Couloir on Monte Rosa and the West Ridge of the Taeschorn.

One of Harry's favorite activities was climbing in the San Juan Mountains of Southwestern Colorado in the spring, often over Memorial Day. Many of these mountains have poor rock, so we liked to go there early in the season when there was plenty of snow on which to make the climbs. We would drive as far as possible, then backpack, perhaps a few miles, to camp in some neat place like Yankee Boy Basin or Silver Pick Basin—often among the ruins of old mines or mills. Around daybreak, Harry was always among the first up to light a fire and start breakfast cooking. Since his asthma continued to bother him, he would also use an inhaler at this early hour and cough and snort to clear his lungs for the day's climb. Then we would set off to climb some little-known peak such as Teakettle, or Gilpin, or Vermillion.

On one of these trips, after two days of wonderful climbing, we spent the night in a campground just north of Ouray, Colorado, before heading back to work. As usual, Harry was up early, starting a fire and clearing his lungs. After the rest of us had emerged from our sleeping bags and were eating breakfast, some other campers came over and expressed concern. They asked if we had heard the bear in the campground. They had heard the bear around dawn, coughing and snorting something awful; they thought he sounded old and cross and they worried that he might come back again....

We miss you, old bear.

GEORGE I. BELL

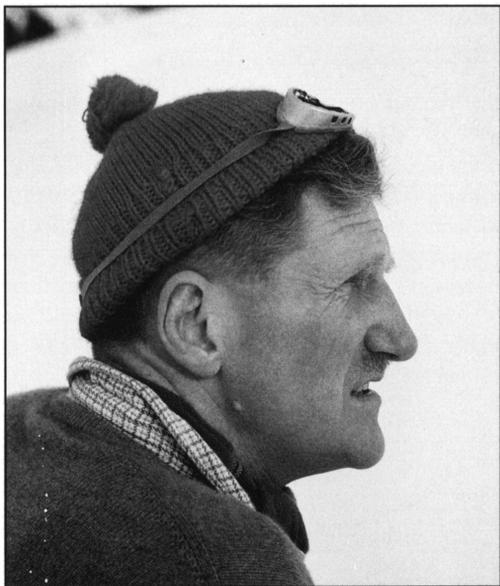
HENRY CECIL JOHN HUNT

1910-1999

Lord Hunt, who led the successful British expedition that made the first ascent of Everest, and who was an honorary member of The American Alpine Club, died on November 8, 1998. He was 89.

Some men do things right. John Hunt was one of them. More than 45 years after the event, it is easy to forget what the circumstances were regarding Everest in 1953. The British had made innumerable attempts on the mountain. All had failed. The Nepalese opened the mountain to other countries and in 1952 the Swiss attempted Everest twice from the south side and almost succeeded. The British had permission for the following year and after that, permission had been granted to other countries. It was apparent that Everest would be climbed. The only question was, by whom? More than 30 years of effort was coming down to one last throw of the dice.

At this critical moment, the Everest Committee decided to switch the leadership of the expedition from Eric Shipton, a very popular mountaineer who was one of Britain's finest Himalayan mountaineers and had made five expeditions to Everest, but who basically ran his trips off the back of an envelope, to John Hunt, an army officer with great organizing ability. The decision was correct, but it was handled badly. Years later, Hunt, who had nothing to do with the decision, was still embarrassed by it.



Henry Cecil J. Hunt. GEORGE BAND

Handicapped by the manner of his selection, facing monumental difficulties of logistics, obtaining oxygen apparatus, selecting personnel and getting them to work as a team, and under intense public scrutiny, John Hunt brought it off. As always, it required a break in the weather, but Hillary and Tenzing, after a tremendous effort, reached the summit on May 29, 1953. The news of the success reached England on June 2, the day of the Coronation of Queen Elizabeth II.

John Hunt was more than a military organizer. He was a mountaineer. He began climbing in the Alps as a young man. Later, while serving in the army in India, he went on various Himalayan expeditions, including an attempt on Saltoro Kangri (a 25,400-foot avalanche trap in the Karakoram) and a reconnaissance of the Kangchenjunga massif. After the

Everest expedition, he regularly went to the Alps to climb and ski. He also led British parties to the Caucasus in 1958 and to the Pamirs in 1962.

Hunt was born in Simla, India, on June 22, 1910, the son of an army officer. He was educated at Marlborough College, where he was first in his class, and then at Sandhurst Military Academy, where he was again first in his class, and was awarded the King's Gold Medal and the Anson Memorial Sword. After service in the King's Royal Rifle Corps in India, he returned to England in 1940, where he was appointed chief instructor in the Commando Mountain and Snow Warfare School. Later, he was given command of the 11th Indian Infantry Brigade and was with them until the end of World War II.

He left the Army in 1956 to run the Duke of Edinburgh's Award Scheme for British youth, during the course of which he led a youth expedition to East Greenland. In addition, he was Chairman of the Parole Board for England and Wales, President of the Council for Volunteers Overseas, and involved with numerous other organizations and commissions. He was Knighted in 1953, and made a Life Peer in 1966. For his dedicated public service, the Queen made him one of 24 Knights of the Garter in 1979.

Hunt also remained active in mountaineering and exploration matters. He was president of The Alpine Club, the Climbers' Club, the British Mountaineering Council, the National Ski Federation, and the Royal Geographical Society.

But hidden behind this incredible record of accomplishment (and at times a diffident appearance to strangers) was an extremely warm and generous man. A caring husband to his wife, Joy, and father to their four daughters, John Hunt was kind to everyone, and especially to his friends. His life and character is best summed up by the word this proper English gentleman scribbled over the printed greetings contained in his last Christmas card: "Love."