

climbed to the vicinity of the last rime formations below the summit mushroom, where a wide crevasse proved impassable. Forced to retreat, they returned back down to the Helmet the same day. Then a fierce storm moved in and for four days they were unable to descend, having to bivouac without sleeping bags or food. It was not until the November 12 that they managed to descend to Filo Rosso, but upon arriving they were unable to find the entrance to their snow cave due to the large amount of new snow and were forced to bivouac outside one more time. This was, according to them, a "death bivy," and they suffered some frostbite in their hands and feet. The next morning they managed to dig out their cave, where they rested for more than a week before they moved out.

Jimmy Surette and Charlie Fowler made an ascent of the route on January 13. Unlike other parties for this climb, they made their Base Camp at Campo Bridwell in the Torre Valley (the east side), rather than at the Filo Roso (below the face to the west). They retreated from the foot of a steep rime formation, 40 meters below the plateau at the base of the summit mushroom. Mick Poynton and Leigh McGinley (U.K.) climbed the route from the Circo de los Altares in February, 2000. Leigh went snowblind on the descent, thinking he had lost his glasses, when in fact they were still in his pack! They retreated from the same place as had Surette and Fowler.

ROLANDO GARIBOTTI, *Club Andino Bariloche*

Hielo Continental Norte, Traverse, and Cerro Pared Norte and Peak 2970m, Ascents. Between November 26, 1998-January 5, 1999, Paolo Cavagnetto* and Lorenzo Nettuno (Italy) and Nigel Topping and I (U.K.) traversed on skis with pulkas a ca. 200 kilometer, north-south route (mostly following the route of Shipton's 1963 expedition) across the Hielo Continental Norte from Laguna San Rafael to the Baker Channel, exiting via the Steffan Glacier. Of our five weeks on the ice, we got just four days of decent weather; the remaining days sat (more toward the latter half as we gained elevation) on a spectrum with moderate winds, low visibility and rain on one end and full tempestuous conditions with driving, frozen sleet or snow on the other. Despite challenging conditions, we completed the traverse and our scientific objectives, failed in an attempt on Cerro Largo and made two first ascents, which were snatched in the only weather window available: Cerro Pared Norte (3005m) (Shipton's original objective), and an unnamed 2970-meter peak* some two kilometers to the south. Neither peak (both involved snow and ice up to 60°) was overly challenging from a technical perspective, but the latter peak was climbed in fairly hostile conditions (on the summit, we were bombarded by coffee-table-sized airborne windslabs ripped up from the windward slopes) marking the onset of a storm that had us pinned down on a nearby col at ca. 2000 meters for five days (up to and including Christmas Day) with an accompanying snowfall in excess of three meters.

The delay put pressure on the final 45 kilometers out via the long and arduously broken and crevassed Steffan Glacier, which was concluded successfully but, in fine epic tradition, without food. From the end of the glacier, which terminated in a large berg and brash-strewn lake with two large rivers flowing from it, we waited for a further three days (living off the "fruits of the forest" and expending much energy waving ice axes and chasing any local wildlife that had the misfortune to chance upon us) for our pre-arranged boat to show up and take us on to Tortel via the glorious Baker Channel.

During the traverse, we took 55 radio-echo sounding measurements of ice thickness and

*Paolo Cavagnetto died in a rock fall along with two aspiring guides on Mt. Blanc in July, 1999. The team has applied to the IGM, Chile, for the unnamed peak that was first climbed on December 21, 1998, to be named after him.

snow cover to compose a climate change/glacier retreat modeling investigation and gathered samples for analysis of persistent organic pollutants (POPs) in the region. To conclude (and with the added luxury of hindsight) all I can say is that Wilfred Noyce's 1969 quote from *The World Atlas of Mountaineering* seems as true as ever: "Most of the glaciers are still untrodden and the area offers a splendid field of new mountaineering possibilities to anyone willing to face the severe weather conditions which prevail."

ALUN HUBBARD, *Wales*

ANTARCTICA

Antarctica, Overview. The 1999-2000 season was the busiest season ever for tourism in Antarctica. This popularity was reflected in the relatively high number of mountaineers active on the continent, particularly in the Peninsula area. Most yacht-based climbers reported generally good weather, and in the Sentinel Range the extremely poor weather of the previous season did not materialize, heralding a return to the traditionally high success rates on Vinson Massif and Mt. Shinn.

DAMIEN GILDEA

ANTARCTIC PENINSULA

First Ascents in the Behrendt Mountains and Bean Peaks, and Other Activity. In December and January, the British Antarctic Survey (BAS) Field Assistant Phil Wickens again made a number of ascents with his party in the course of their geological work. They were working in the Orville Coast region, an area never visited by non-government climbers but which has seen some previous ascents in the Latady Mountains by American scientists (reported in this journal). This area is at the extreme southern end of the Peninsula, on the eastern side, which is not accessible by yacht.

The party started in the Behrendt Mountains in early December, where they summited five peaks, the highest being Mt. Hirman (1200m). They then moved to the Mt. Hassage area, summiting Mt. Hassage (1100m). Both these areas had previously been visited by scientists but no ascents have been recorded. The party then moved to the Bean Peaks in late December, where they climbed five peaks and nunataks, the highest being Carlson Peak (1289m). They also did some climbing on Cape Zumberge.

In mid-January, the group visited the Hauberg Mountains, where they climbed three peaks, the highest being Novocin Peak (1304m). This peak had been climbed by Americans Carrara and Kellog in November 1977, by the north ridge. Wickens' group also made an interesting traverse of a six-kilometer long ridge in the northern Hauberg Mountains, which contained many peaks, the highest at 1300 meters.

Finally, in early February, the group visited the Wilkins Mountains, where two peaks were climbed, and then the Latady Mountains, where three peaks were climbed, the highest of them being McLaughlin Peak (1700m).

DAMIEN GILDEA