

On May 31, we resumed climbing, opting to turn the black band on the left. Future parties should climb a beautiful grade 2/3 waterice gully between our route and the first ascent route. We couldn't see into the gully until several hard pitches put us above it.

Above, we skirted along on snow on the left side of the *Spur* for several rope lengths and ended up chopping into ice again for one and a half hours. On June 1, we all gained the horizontal finish to the *Spur*, where Carl and I again profited from the Lads' steps and shovel work. Carl and I skirted the last pale granite buttress on the left and scampered up immaculate mixed ground between it and the tumbling glacier. The Lads took the buttress direct and Glen took a 30-foot fall. Against the edge of the glacier that caps the *Spur*, Carl and I scampered right and quickly up a snow gully. The Lads caught us, profiting from our steps, and we all traversed back into the glacier and into a huge 'schrund that yielded an easy camp and bivy with no chopping.

On June 2, we continued on fourth-class ground up a large gully right and into the clouds. At the top of the gully, we unroped and by and by reached the very top of the south face and a fine flat camp against a crevasse and sheltering wall.

On June 3, Carl and I plodded over the top of Foraker and descended the *Sultana Ridge*. At 2:30 p.m., we choose to rest in the tent and brew for five and a half hours. We then continued through the night, traversing the five miles of ridge to Mt. Crosson, reaching the edge of the Kahiltna and finally the airstrip. Carl and I were very tired lads.

BARRY BLANCHARD, *Canada*

*Mt. Foraker, Infinite Spur, Ascent by Lads.* At 4 p.m. on May 26, Gren Hinton and I skied into the *Infinite Spur's* amphitheater. In the afternoon heat, the walls all around us began to wake after a storm and, restlessly stretching, began to shed the poorly adhered layers of snow. As avalanche after avalanche swept down from 6,000 feet above, we watched closely the line that offered the easiest weakness in the 3,000-foot buttress that guards the high steep ridges of the spur. Comparatively little debris entered the 2,000-foot ice couloir that split the fortress wall.

We planned to climb just 600 feet and bivy right of the couloir, waiting for night to climb the rest. Behind schedule at 11 a.m., I had topped the last pitch before making our planned traverse to safety and was just beginning to bring Gren up when I heard a rumble. Looking up, I saw our bane hurling down with immeasurable speed. I grabbed my pack, threw it over my head and threw my body against the wall with my belay arm firmly buried to protect what held my partner. Just as I hit the wall, it hit us. When the roaring and pummeling settled, I made a quick self diagnosis, and finding only a few sharp bruises, I called to Gren. Fine but also shaken, he sped up to join me, and soon we were out of the couloir and safely under the protection of the main granite buttress.

Still feeling good about the route, we began climbing at 10 p.m. and by 4 a.m. we had exited the couloir. In it we encountered at worst 5.5 and AI3; it was a cruise. We then simulclimbed another 1,000 feet between the hanging glacier and the *Spur* proper before bivouacking at 7 a.m. Again we encountered nothing worse than grade 3 glacial ice. Though very easy, this course is not recommended! During the day, we heard much of what sounded like a search and rescue. By 7 p.m. we realized that we had been missing, presumed dead (see previous note).

The next morning, as we climbed the two pitches that separated us from Carl and Barry, the NPS high-altitude Llama hovered 500 feet out and adjacent to Gren. I gave the visual confirmation they needed to bring our families the good news that their boys, soon to be dubbed

“the Lads,” were still alive and kicking crampons.

Passing Carl and Barry’s camp, we climbed two pitches through steep snow and ice. We had been following the obvious weaknesses, but were now forced onto steep mixed rock and snow, some of which was actually inverted. We pulled these hard mixed hooking moves (5.9) through short bands of steep rock with 60-pound packs (the technical crux of the route), then climbed through deep snow to gain the ice arête that was in fact an unprotectable steep snow slog.

Working together, Carl, Barry, Gren, and I made meticulously slow work through the next 1,000 feet. As soon as possible, we made a traverse to a rock fin we could get protection in and bivied at the top, below a large rock buttress.

The next day stormed, so we did not move. On May 31, we climbed for seven hours up a moderate mixed ridge that could have been easily bypassed in two hours via an AI2 couloir. We highly recommend the couloir. Traversing around steep rock, Gren and I headed through to gain the last corniced ridge.

The next day, we all headed up, and, just two pitches short of the end of the technical climbing, Gren and I made the biggest fool’s mistake. An argument broke loose and soon budded into an exchange of blows. A fistfight at 14,000 feet on Mt. Foraker’s *Infinite Spur* is not recommended!

After a day of steep snow climbing and a bivouac in a crevasse at 16,000 feet, we summited about an hour after Barry and Carl, then started down the *Sultana* and reached our starting point on the Southeast Kahiltna in a day and a half. Notable aspects of the climb are: the use of bivy sacs (semi-recommended), free climbed the whole route with packs on, round-trip from Southeast Kahiltna base camp in 11 days.

GLEN DEAL

*Mount Huntington, West Face.* At 6:30 p.m. on May 6, less than 24 hours after we left Colorado, Talkeetna Air Taxi deposited Dave Bangert and me on the Tokisitna Glacier below the west face of Mt. Huntington. It was bitterly cold. On May 8, we climbed about 2,500 feet of what has come to be known as the Nettle-Quirk route in ten hours. At the “Alcove,” where the Nettle-Quirk joins the Harvard Route, we brewed for two hours as the weather deteriorated, and it began to snow lightly but steadily. We carried only one sleeping bag, one bivy sack, one stove, and no tent. After some consternation, we descended.

Rappelling from the V-threads Dave established, we passed Steve House and his partner, who were climbing up with heavy sacks. Steve and his partner descended and flew out on May 10, along with a party that had climbed the Harvard Route in three days, while Dave and I had sat tent-bound mulling the efficacy of our “light and fast” tactics.

Left alone on the glacier, we decided to have another go. On May 12, we left the tents at 4 a.m. carrying a stove, three liters of water, two Friends, two pins, six ice screws, three Screammers, 15 free ’biners, and some snacks. We reached the bergschrund in 1:15, the beginning of the roped climbing on the ramp in 2:15 and the Alcove in six hours. Avoiding the loss of momentum suffered in stopping to brew, we reached the French Ridge at 9:08. The weather was perfect. Dave voted for the summit, some 200 vertical corniced feet higher. I opted to descend. We arrived at the tents five hours later.

Despite the postmodern diminution of the importance of reaching the summit, I regret not standing on top of Huntington. It would have been nice to see what lay on the other side.

MICHAEL GILBERT