

The team fixed ropes on February 21 and 22. On February 23, they established Camp I at 4360 meters, from which they operated for the next two days. On February 25, they attempted to reach the ridge, but the mixed section consisted of very difficult conditions, and the team was forced to set up a Camp II at 4560 meters, one pitch before the ridge. The summit was reached on February 26, and a return to Base Camp was made on the 27th.

Due to rockfall danger in the summertime, the route could only be attempted in winter conditions, when the average daytime temperatures reach  $-25^{\circ}\text{C}$ .

VLADIMIR SHATAEV and VLADIMIR KOPYLOV, *Russian Mountaineering Federation*

## PAMIR-ALAI

*Ak-Su, Various Ascents and Terrorist Activity.* The members of our expedition were Robert Lange, Stefan Hiermaier, Radan Svec, Michael Meyer, Lutz Wenzel, and Roland Lämmermann. Before we had our "little" terrorist experience, we climbed several routes. On Pamir Pyramid (3600m), Stefan, Mike, Lutz, and Radan climbed *The Missing Mountain* (6b, 580m), while Robert and Roland climbed a 1996 Italian line (18 pitches, 600m, just two belay stances with bolts) straight through the face (7a). Robert, Lutz, and Roland also climbed *Crack Suzy* (6b, 7 pitches, ca. 350m) on Pik du Pamir. On Peak 1000 Years of Russian Christianity, Radan and Roland climbed the French Pillar in three days, while on the Russian Tower, the parties of Robert and Lutz, and Stefan and Mike, both climbed the *Perestroika Crack* (7a+) all free and in one day on August 7.

Roland, Michael, and four Ukrainians who had arrived three days earlier were kidnapped on August 11. The rest of the group, including Andre Carnienko, was up on the glacier to climb the Bird. When we came down, Base Camp was completely gone, including people, with no hint of what had happened. We got the people on the glacier down; Andre went to the locals in some huts near the confluence of the Kara-Su and Ak-Su valleys, two hours down from our base camp, who told him of the terrorists. The locals said that the terrorists might stay for four or five days. So we hid behind big boulders, hoping they wouldn't come back to get us.

The next day we were shot at by a Kyrgyz military helicopter, which fired two rockets near our base camp, one where we got fresh water, and two more up the glacier. The pilot knew that we were there because we had showed up there before with a red bivy sack to get rescued, but he apparently thought we were terrorists. The next day was quiet. At night Andre went down to the locals and found out that they were all gone. Since there were no signs of violence, we thought that the terrorists were gone and we decided to go down to the military post early the next day. As we walked down to a graveyard beyond an apricot tree, we met the front line of the Kyrgyz Army. They did not shoot us (our biggest worry).

On August 15, we met Roland and the rest of the kidnapped group at the military post. They had been set free (or, more accurately, simply abandoned by their guards) the morning before, then met a Special Forces unit who accompanied them over the next few days. A helicopter brought us to a military camp in Badkent, where we spent the night. We were interviewed on TV, at which point the public first came to know of these events.

The KGB held us in Badkent the next day for interviews, before we drove to Fergana at night and Tashkent the next day.

ROBERT LANGE, *Germany*