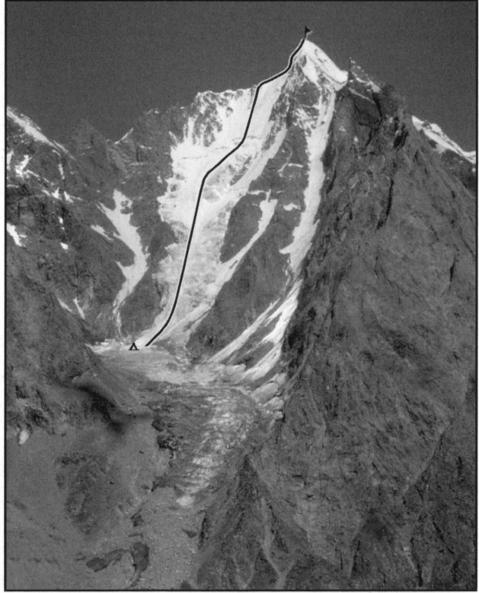


cial basin named Rockfall Basin. Advanced Base Camp (4850m) was positioned on the upper end of Rockfall Basin just below a small icefall that marked the commencement of the route's technical terrain. Despite its ominous name, Rockfall Basin is a breathtaking place with high-quality granite walls towering above in all directions beckoning for future big-wall ascents. Camp I (5300m) and Camp II (5650m) were placed on top of a serac and in a depression on the ridge (Desperation Col), respectively. The angle of ascent ranged from 30 degrees to 70 degrees on consistent ice.

The summit was reached seven days after reaching Base Camp, with three nights spent above Advanced Base Camp. To avoid rockfall, the majority of climbing took place in the early morning. When a snowstorm forced a hasty descent from High Camp, the consistently steep route sent numerous sloughs of snow cascading over the climbers, adding final excitement to the climb. Overall the route offered solid, sustained, and enjoyable climbing throughout, and both climbers deem it worthy of a repeat ascent.



Nico Sar, showing the line of first ascent (Keller-Rice, 2000). WALTER KELLER

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WALTER KELLER

Kuti Dorkush, First Ascent, Previously Unreported. The first ascent of Kuti Dorkush, attributed to a 1995 two-person Irish team via the Southwest Ridge, is now thought to have been first made in 1959 by two people who were part of a scientific expedition doing triangulation survey work in the Baltura Muztagh. Rudolf Bardodey and a porter, Kabul, approached from the south, reached a notch at ca. 5300 meters on the west ridge, then traversed to the crest of the north ridge, which they followed to the summit. (*High Mountain Sports* 221)

Ghujerab Mountains

Passes over the Central Asian Watershed, First Crossings. John Mock and Kimberley O'Neil completed a 29-day exploration of the Ghujerab Mountains in the northern Karakoram Range northeast of the Shimshal Pass and west of the Shaksgam (Muztagh) and Oprang rivers, the only part of Pakistan that lies within the Central Asian watershed. We reconnoitered and crossed two previously unknown passes, which we named Ghidims Pass and Ghidims Pass South, over the Central Asian watershed, and also crossed Mai Dur Pass, first crossed in 1925 by the Visser-Hooft Expedition but neglected ever since.

Leaving Shimshal village on June 15, we crossed Shpodeen Pass (5346m) from the Zardgarben Valley into the Pamir Mai Dur Valley on June 17. On June 19 we crossed the

glaciated Mai Dur Pass (5700m) into the Ghuzherav Mai Dur Valley. We found the pass corniced with a ten-meter vertical headwall on its east side.

We then ascended the Ghidims Valley. On June 23 and 24, we explored the glacier at the valley's head, ascended a ridge to 5800 meters, and saw a feasible route over the watershed into Sher Ilaq Valley. On June 26, we crossed Ghidims Pass South (5650m) in the middle of the snow-covered rock ridge that formed the watershed. The descent on the Sher Ilaq side paralleled a rock rib that descended from the ridge. We made two rappels to the base of the rib and crossed the bergschrund below, which was bridged by snow from winter avalanches. We traversed north across the glacial basin (the North Rost-e-Dur Glacier's southeast arm) to the base of a rock spur, where we crossed onto a moraine. We followed this moraine due east, then crossed to the glacier's north margin.

Being the first westerners to ever visit the Sher Ilaq Valley, we spent four days exploring, then returned to a high camp (5060m) on the watershed's eastern side on July 1.

We decided to try a different return route, and on July 2 we crossed the upper North Rost-e-Dur Glacier and headed toward a prominent rock rib in the middle of an arm of the upper glacier. We traversed the upper basin of this small arm, then ascended a snow-covered 40-degree slope to the unglaciated Ghidims Pass (5486m). The descent from the pass was a 45-degree slope of mixed scree and rock covered by fresh snowfall. At the base, we crossed a small unnamed glacier and followed its lateral moraine and outflow stream to the main Ghidims Valley. We returned to Shimshal via Boesam Pass (4875m), the standard route between the Ghuzherav and Shimshal valleys.

JOHN MOCK *and* KIMBERLEY O'NEIL

Hispar Muztagh

Lupghar West II, Ascent. It was reported that Nicolas Sieger led a four-member team on an attempt of Lupghar West II (7010m) in August. When time ran out, three of the team members left for home, but Sieger remained behind to continue efforts on the mountain. On August 21, he left Base Camp (4400m) at 7 a.m., reaching 5500 meters, where he bivouacked. The next day, encountering sustained difficulties with snow as steep as 70 degrees above 6000 meters, he continued to the summit, which he reached at 9 p.m. He descended through the night to reach BC at 7 a.m. He named the peak "La Rochelle" after his home town. (*High Mountain Sports* 221)

Spantik-Sosbun Mountains

Spantik, British Route, Second Ascent and Variation. Mikhail Davy, Alexander Klenov, Marko Prezelj, Manu Guy, Manu Pellissier and Attila Ozsvath traveled to Spantik (7028m) in June. After climbing 25 pitches of the British route, Davy and Klenov reached the summit on July 18 via 28 new pitches up to 7a A3. On their second attempt, Guy, Ozsvath, Pellissier and Prezelj made the second ascent of the British route with a number of pitches of new climbing. A full account of the expedition appears earlier in this journal.

Sekha Brakk, First Ascent. It was reported that a British team consisting of Dave Wilkinson (leader), Ken Findlay, Paul Hudson and Karl Zientek made a probable first ascent of Sekha