

early and were soon soloing the initial snow and ice slopes in the red morning light. The gully took shape 200m up: time to tie on and use the huge rack. We knew we had our work cut out, with endless ice disappearing to blue sky. At least it was going to be fun. Unsure of the weather and with no idea what was in store, we decided to fix ropes and come back the next day if the weather held. Luck was on our side, and we soon regained our high point, with food and equipment for three days in heavy rucksacks and a haul bag. Pitch after pitch fueled our addiction, leaving us wanting more, curious as to what was ahead, and, more importantly, would it go? Two key sections proved crucial in linking the line. Leering above me I saw the first. We'd had our suspicions down on the glacier as to whether there was any ice here. With the couloir here narrowed to the width of my hips, but with ice in the back, vertical for 60m, I could barely hang in there. Christened the "No Hips Pitch," it didn't go without a fight. Tired and ready for a break, we found ourselves at an easier section of snow, three meters wide and at the average angle of Green Gully on Ben Nevis. Two hours of hacking ice and an avalanche later, we were dug in for the night. Constant spindrift patterning on our bivy bags ensured that we woke restless and feeling weak. However, ahead lay our wake-up call: more steep ice. The climbing on the second day was far more sustained, often 90° ice, with little shelter for the poor belayers apart from the haul bag, except when we found an ice cave behind pillars in the upper couloir. With 22 pitches of out-there ice behind us, we stood on the summit of The Citadel at 8 p.m. on May 3. Though tempted by exhaustion to bivy again, we descended through the night because the weather was changing. It was one of the best decisions we made. We arrived early in the morning to falling snow that was to last for 24 hours and leave a meter on the ground at base camp. Many thanks to the MEF, the BMC, and the Sports Council for Wales, who supported the expedition. An alpinist's dream, the Supa Dupa Couloir (ED4 WI6).

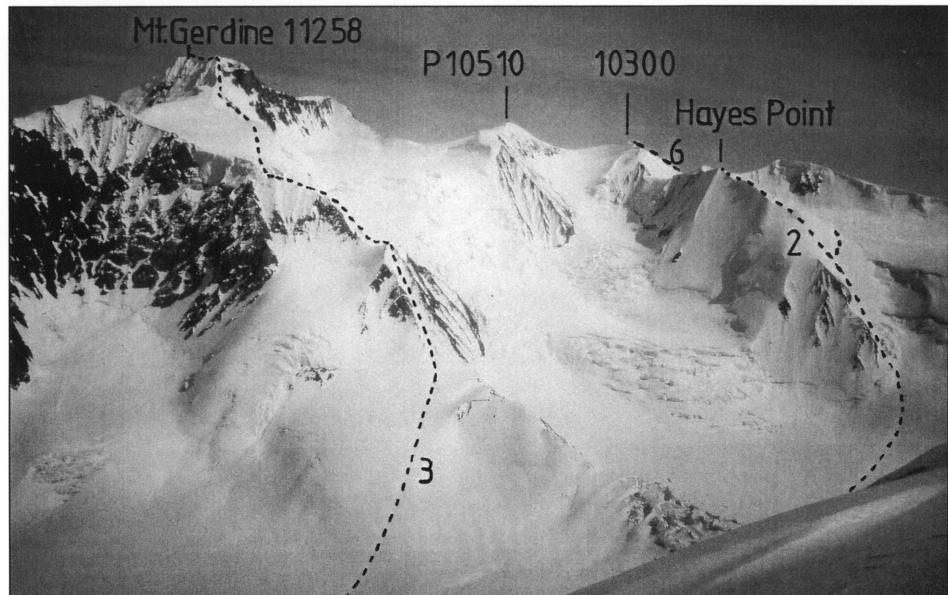
STU MC ALEESE, Wales

## TORDRILLO MOUNTAINS

*Mt. Gerdine, Northwest Ridge and various activity.* On April 4 Johnny Soderstrom, Zach Shlosar, and I flew in with Paul Roderick of Talkeetna Air Taxi. Flying into this fairly unexplored area was quite an experience, being surrounded by untouched granite towers, pillars of ice, and 3,000' couloirs. Having received Mountaineering Fellowship Grants from the AAC, Johnny and I recruited Zach for the unclimbed northwest ridge of Mt. Gerdine (11,258'). We were landed on the main flow of the Hayes Glacier at 4,700', six miles down the east fork from the base of the route. We put in a camp at the base of the Hayes Volcano, at 6,000'. With the base of Mt. Gerdine being guarded by an icefall, we were forced to climb the Hayes Volcano to Point 8,300', which made for a great ski or snowboard trip down. Not finding a route around, we were forced to traverse the Hayes Volcano, descend a gully on the backside, and travel across a slope exposed to ice fall, weaving through cracks to intersect the northwest ridge at 7,300'. We found the lower ridge scoured by the wind, leaving it beautiful hard blue ice. The ridge was straightforward; we belayed a few steps of ice and simul-climbed the rest, with the angle varying between 40° and 75°. At 9,600' we came to a balcony dividing the upper and lower ridges, which made a good camp. The temperature fell to about -15°F as darkness came. After cooking for a few hours outside, I crawled into the tent to warm up and found that a big toe was frozen. With my foot in Zach's armpit, the three of us dozed off in our cozy Bibler. The next morning, April 7, we awoke

to blue skies and a throbbing toe. Thinking that I could wait a couple of hours to go down, Johnny and Zach headed for the summit, as I stayed in camp. They found the upper ridge to be fun, straightforward climbing on névé, with the angle varying between 40° and 70°. After negotiating a few bergschrunds they reached the summit, with a view encompassing Denali and the Alaska Range, the Kichatnas, Revelations, Neacolas, Cook Inlet, the Chugach, and the Talkeetna mountains. After rappelling off a bollard from the summit, they hurried back to camp, and we packed and descended. With a few variations we descended the line of ascent, using seven V-threads, one picket, and much downclimbing. Back at the runway we spent three days trying to contact a plane for an early pickup. Johnny and Zach took advantage of the nice weather and skied a couple of couloirs to the east of camp. On the front of Peak 6,330' there are seven rock towers with couloirs between most of them. We named this formation the Seven Dwarves after they skied the two south couloirs. On April 11 Paul circled over and flew us home to Talkeetna. Happy with our shortened trip to this new area, we left with a first ascent of Mt. Gerdine's Northwest Ridge (4,000', AK grade 3, AI3), first descents of the Hayes Volcano and the two southern couloirs of the Seven Dwarves, and a purple toe.

JARED VILHAUER



Mt. Gerdine, looking east from north ridge of Peak 10,030'. Routes: (2) Hayes Point (9,600'), southwest ridge; (3) Mt. Gerdine (11,258'), southwest ridge; (6) Peak 10,300', south ridge. Guenter Zimmerman

*Hayes Glacier, various ascents.* From April 30 to May 15 Uwe Nootbaar, Thomas Speck, and I made four first ascents on unclimbed peaks or points and climbed Mt. Gerdine (11,258', fifth ascent) by a partly new route. The peaks are shown on the USGS Tyonek C-7 map. On April 30 we flew into the upper Hayes Glacier, at 6,000', where we established our base camp. On May 1 we skied up a small glacier northwest of Peak 9,670' (1.6 mi west of Mt. Gerdine) to a bergschrund at 7,500' and climbed the northwest face of Peak 9,670' by an 1,800' snow couloir