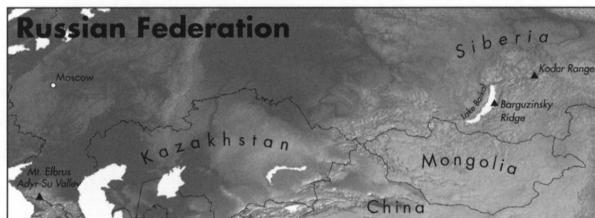


## Russia

### CENTRAL CAUCASUS

*Chatyn-tau, north face, first winter ascent.* Probably the most notable achievement in the Caucasus was the first winter ascent of the main north face of Chatyn-tau (4,368m), via the feature known as the Rhombus. Chatyn-tau stands just north of the famous double-summitted Ushba.



The first recorded winter ascent of Chatyn took place in February 1984, when Boris Barulin, Anatoliy Moshnikov (leader), Sergey Kalmikov, and Victor Sazanov followed the Moshnikov Route over the summit of Pik Trud (Russian 5B). In February 1994 a team from the Elbrus Mountain Rescue Service put up a new route at 5B on the far right side of the north-northwest face, close to the Ushba Pass. Twelve years later Andrei Kazakov, Sergey Nilov, and Victor Volodin started up the north face but were forced down by bad weather, leaving their portaledge and other equipment on the wall. One month later, in March, they were back, but on their third day, again in bad weather, their portaledge broke, and they retreated.

Nilov got together another team and arrived in the Caucasus at the end of December with Dmitry Golovchenko, Sergey Kutkin, and Sergey Michailov. Temperatures at their base camp dropped to  $-19^{\circ}\text{C}$  and it took five days to shuttle gear to the foot of the face through deep snow. At the end of the second day of the climb Michailov became ill, and the team retreated again, leaving their gear at the foot of the face. All but Nilov were now nearing the end of their holiday time, so Nilov made calls to enlist new volunteers. Sergey Doronin and Evgeny Korol arrived, and the three-man team left on January 17, 2007, for Nilov's fourth attempt. The team progressed up the Myshliaev Route (6A) on the Rhombus, fixing their five ropes above the ledge before moving up.

The team made progress mostly by aid climbing. Advancing was difficult, and erecting the portaledge in wind and night temperatures of  $-30^{\circ}\text{C}$  proved a struggle. At several points on the way they found little notes, left in tins as waymarks by previous ascensionists. On the 25th they left the portaledge and climbed to the exit of this couloir over a large roof. Above, they reached a corniced ridge and were quickly on the summit, which they gained at 11 a.m.

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### SIBERIA

### ALTAI RANGE

*Pik Vector, first ascent.* From March 7-23 Aleksey Avdienko, Maxim Brits, Vitaly Ivanov (leader), and Igor Slobodchikov made the first ascent of Pik 3,716m in the Mushtuajri valley not far from the highest peak in the range, Belukha (4,506m). The team climbed the middle of the northwest face in capsule style, using portaledges. They named the peak Vector. Their route, graded 6B, is probably the hardest yet established in the Altai.

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