

# In Memoriam

## JOHN EDGAR BREITENBACH

1935-1963

John Edgar Breitenbach was killed on March 23, 1963 in the Khumbu Icefall of Mount Everest by a collapsing wall of ice.

Jake climbed throughout North America, made significant ascents in the Tetons, climbed McKinley by the West Buttress and again by the western rim of the South Face, and attempted Mount Steele in the St. Elias Range. He was a member of the 1963 American Mount Everest Expedition. Jake was a fine mountaineer. He never climbed Mount Owen, although he went to within a yard of the summit many times. He thought that someday he might want to climb Owen for the first time, and perhaps he enjoyed the courting.

He graduated in mathematics from Oregon State College, then made his home in Jackson Hole, Wyoming, where he guided for six years and operated a ski shop. He is survived by his wife, his parents, a brother, and his friends, all of whom loved him.

Exultant, tolerant of himself and others, delighted by new horizons, Jake was always searching, searching harder than most. He also lived harder than most and was once a swinger of birches. He liked sunsets, the New World Symphony, yellow rock in the sunlight, watching his own history, cold nights, catching a fish. He was very happy in the icefall the day he died, though he knew that mountains sometimes move.

Most of all, Jake scribed the future through his friends, which imprint will survive. His friends will recognize the epitaph Jake always wanted —  
*Long live the crew.*

JAMES BARRY CORBET

## DAVID AMBLER SOWLES

1933-1963

David Ambler Sowles was born on October 16, 1933, and was killed in a tragic climbing accident on August 4, 1963 during an electrical storm while descending the north ridge of the Weisshorn after a successful ascent of the Schalligrat. The details of his death will never be known. Those of us who had climbed with David and his companion John Emery, can only surmise that they were the victims of forces beyond the normal periphery of human control.

David first went to school in Chicago, graduated with honors from New Mexico Military Institute, earned his B.A. at Stanford University in 1955. From 1956 to 1959 he was a jet bomber pilot in the United States Air Force. He then returned to civilian life to obtain his M.A. in English at the University of Minnesota. In July, 1961 he married Ellen Middlebrooks of Barnesville, Georgia. From 1962 to 1963 he served as Master at Christ Church School, Christ Church, Virginia.

Dave's interest in mountaineering started at Stanford University in 1952 and developed during a number of successful trips to mountains in the United States, Canada, South America and Europe. Dave was a natural mountaineer with excellent coordination, great strength and a sense of good judgment in the mountains. During his stay at Stanford University Dave climbed many of the most difficult routes — Yosemite Valley, Pinnacles National Monument — and his leadership pioneered a number of new routes and climbs. In all of these ventures the parties looked to Dave to lead the most difficult sections of the climb. Those of us who climbed with Dave often remarked about his extraordinary rock climbing ability and the fact that none of us knew of an instance where he actually fell, a rare distinction among rock climbers. In 1954 he visited the Coast Range of British Columbia where, among other notable achievements, he made the first ascent of Serra IV, until then the highest unclimbed summit of provincial Canada. The following year he was in Peru where he climbed in the Pucahirca Range of the Cordillera Blanca and also ascended 22,205-foot Mount Huascarán, his highest summit. Even during his military service Dave maintained his interest and enthusiasm for mountaineering, utilizing every available leave for mountaineering ventures. He remained active as a mountaineer until his death in 1963.

Not only was Dave an active mountaineer in the sense of physical ascents but he also was an ardent student of mountaineering literature. He maintained complete and well written journals covering most of his climbing activities. Had he lived he probably would have made significant contributions to mountaineering.

Such, in brief, is David's story. But David Sowles was more than his biography. He had a keen, perceptive intellect, a sensitive appreciation of human frailties, a wistful sense of humor, and a quiet courage which never failed to inspire his companions. His was a gentle strength, a deep sense of confidence and responsibility, an understanding heart. He cherished his most modest possession even as he treasured his richest prize. Above all he loved the wonderful world where God made him.

Those of us who knew David were prepared to go anywhere with him — even unto the Weisshorn on August 4, 1963, in hindsight's sure

knowledge of what would have awaited us. Dave's climbing companions knew that his presence on an outing improved vastly its chances for success and assured an atmosphere of cooperation and efficiency. He was a mountaineer's mountaineer.

Today David's life is rounded with a sleep. But even as these words are written it is hard to believe that he is gone. Our future trips to the mountains will always be tinged with a note of sadness knowing that our finest companion is gone. We shall stand for a moment of silent prayer and know that his spirit rests in the mountains he loved.

ANDREW JOHN KAUFFMAN, II and GARY DRIGGS

EDWIN MULLER, JR.

1892-1963

Edwin Muller, a roving editor of the *Reader's Digest* for more than 25 years, died in Good Hill, Kent, Connecticut on September 20 at the age of 71. He was born in Louisville, Kentucky on March 23, 1892, the son of a Presbyterian minister, graduated from Princeton in 1914 with a B.A. degree and spent one year in the Harvard Law School. He left law school in 1916 to join Doubleday, Page & Co. but resigned to become a partner with Herbert S. Houston in a publishing venture. His interest in mountain climbing resulted in magazine articles that appeared in the *Saturday Evening Post*, *Collier's* and other periodicals and led to his joining the *Reader's Digest*. During his years as roving editor he covered much of the world and was a war correspondent in Europe during World War II. His climbing record was not large, but he loved the mountains, reading about them, writing about them and climbing them as well as he could. He had been in a number of Alpine areas and also visited the Canadian Rockies and Selkirks. He joined the American Alpine Club in 1928 and fully enjoyed his membership. In addition to a small book, *They Climbed the Alps*, in his last years he wrote articles on his Alpine flight with Hermann Geiger and about the guide, Otto Furrer, whom he had known. He is survived by his widow, the former Mary Thayer, and a son by a previous marriage.

J. MONROE THORINGTON

ROBERT HAMILTON BISHOP, III

1916-1963

Bob Bishop died by his own hand on December 11, 1963. Those of us who had seen him only a few days previously had found him as cheerful and active as usual and had no premonition of the tragedy shortly to occur.