

Peak 7640, Chugach Range. In the course of a traverse of the Western Chugach icecap from Eklutna to Girdwood, on August 20 my brother William and I made the first ascent of Peak 7640, for which we have proposed the name of "Bellicose Peak". This is, I believe, the third highest peak in this region. Our route along the southwest ridge took some 12 hours up and back. Leaving the col at noon, we scrambled forth over alternately fairly good and quite loose rock. For the rest of the afternoon we worked between the ridge line and the south face until only a short series of gendarmes stood between us and the top. These we finished with an 80-foot rappel from some blocks onto the final col before we climbed scree to the top at six P.M. Our last three hours down the ridge were in the blackest night. Northern lights draped the sky and it was a beautiful sight.

JOHN BOUSMAN, *Mountaineering Club of Alaska*

Mount Gerdine, Alaska Range. The ascent of Mount Gerdine (10,765 feet) was finally completed on May 5 after two previous unsuccessful attempts. The first was made in September, 1961, by Helga Bading, Dr. Rod Wilson, Gregg Erickson and John Dillman, all of Anchorage, and Bob Byhre of Seattle, who landed by float plane on upper Beluga Lake, 100 miles west of Anchorage and 20 miles east of Mount Gerdine. Technical difficulties and lack of time forced them to abandon the attempt after three days. The second party consisted of Rod Wilson, Lowell Thomas, Jr., Dave Kimball, Dr. George Wichman, Paul Crews, Jr., and Paul Crews, Sr. To avoid problems of the first attempt, on March 18 Thomas made two flights in his Cessna 180 and landed us on the east branch of the Hayes Glacier at 5200 feet. This placed us below the only bend on the glacier, where it turns almost 90° to due west and rises into a mass of crevasses and séracs at 6500 feet. By seven P.M. we had camp set up, the plane tied down and "glacierized" until our return. The following morning, roped and on skis, we proceeded up the left side of the glacier for about three miles, stopped short of huge piles of ice avalanche debris, and after changing to crampons, started ascending a snow chute on the left that we hoped would ultimately lead us to the snow plateau above the main glacier's icefall. About 500 feet higher, at 7500 feet, the chute brought us to what we thought was a fairly well protected snow and rock ridge, where we camped. We had just started the platform excavation when we were unfortunately inundated with loose snow and ice chunks. As it was too late to move camp, we altered activities from platform building to cave excavation, on the theory that it is less painful to suffocate than to roll down a mountain inside a tent. A quick reconnais-

sance the next morning indicated the avalanche hazards and counselled a strategic retreat back down the snow chute. After the loss of a day's time, at ten A.M. we started laterally through the main icefall to the left (south) side of the glacier. This route went exceedingly well, and with only minor difficulties we reached the upper plateau and camp, alternately skiing and cramponing. A deceptive route caused a leisurely pace the next day to our defeat. After ascending the upper plateau by 1:30 to the base of the final summit pyramid at 8000 feet, a wrong route in an icefall at 10,000 brought unnecessary delays; at 5:30, with a temperature of -5° , we gave up the route, 600 feet from the summit, and began the retreat to camp and Anchorage. It was dark an hour later, but with the aid of flashlights, trailmarkers, shouting, intuition and hunger pangs we were in camp at 9:30. We all flew back to Anchorage the next day.

The third attempt culminated in success on May 5, thanks to experience gained on the two preceding efforts. The party was the same as in the last climb except for Dave Kimball, who was "outside" in Colorado. We landed on May 4, made camp on the upper plateau a little higher than on the previous attempt and left at five A.M. for the summit. We took a slightly different route on the upper ice wall and with no major difficulties reached the top at 12:30. The descent started an hour later in a $+10^{\circ}$ gale with lowering clouds, and we were at camp by 3:30. The next day we skied to the plane and flew home on schedule. It should be mentioned that the route climbed is considered not safe from the middle of May to October because of falling rock loosened by melting ice during the warmer months. (This mountain had previously been given the altitude of 12,600 feet, but the new map of the region, Tyonek 1958 1:250,000, reduces its height to 10,765, which makes it lower than its neighbor, Mount Torbert, which is now given as 11,413 feet. — *Editor.*)

PAUL B. CREWS

Mount St. Elias, Attempt from North. Between June 16 and July 5 a party of seven attempted Mount St. Elias (18,008 feet) from the north. Members of the expedition were Boyd Everett, leader, Ted Church, Rein Grabbi, Robert Jones, Ants Leemets, Robert Page and Kurt Wehbring. We intended to ascend the previously unclimbed north face and on June 16 were landed four miles from it on the Columbus Glacier at 7200 feet by Jack Wilson of Glenallen. At 8:45 A.M. the next morning an earthquake of magnitude 5 to $5\frac{1}{2}$ was experienced at Base Camp which caused an avalanche cloud to pass over the camp. On the following days, unusual avalanche activity was seen on all the surrounding mountain walls, including parts of the proposed route on the north face. On June 19 we