

has previously been climbed by the Argentines Peterek, Klenk and Pastewski on February 3, 1957. Eric Shipton and Jack Ewer made the second ascent.

JEFFREY B. SALZ

*Fitz Roy and Paine Cuerno Attempts, Patagonia and P c. 1700, Cordillera Darwin, Tierra del Fuego.* The South African Andean Expedition started its climbing in the Fitz Roy area from December 1972 to February 1973. The main objective was the Fitz Roy Supercouloir. The weather during our stay was at least consistent: five good days in ten weeks! However Roger Fuggle and Tony Dick (accompanied on two occasions by Brian de Villiers and me) made a total of eight attempts on the 5000-foot couloir. On their best attempt in February they had actually completed the couloir and had only 500 feet of easy ground to the summit when a storm prevented them from continuing. De Villiers and I also made the third ascent of Aguja Guillaumet via the south-east ridge (UIAA IV+) with one bivouac, and accompanied by the rest of the party, Judy Dick, Lynette Adnams and Ineke Moseley, visited the icecap near Gorra Blanca and made an ascent of Cerro Solo. Three of us, de Villiers, Ineke and Greg Moseley, visited the Cordillera Darwin in February. From Lapataia we walked across the Chilean border to Bahía Yendegaia. We proceeded up the Río Yendegaia for two days to the Stoppani Glacier, which we followed to a large tributary which entered from the west. We followed the north bank of this for a few hours to a perfect campsite in a hollow in the moraine. The next day, February 25, we continued to the head of the glacier from where we climbed the peak (c. 1700 meters or 5578 feet) immediately south of the col by an interesting mixed route of UIAA IV difficulty. In March we made a brief visit to the Paine range. From camp on the Río Francés Dick and Fuggle attempted the Cuerno Principal. The peak is very easy until the final 250-foot tower. This last section has repulsed several strong attempts, including Whillans, Clough, Jack Miller and Japanese. After circling the peak, our friends found no feasible route and so the mountain awaits a second ascent. The first ascent was made by Chileans in 1968.

GREGORY MOSELEY, *South African Alpine Club*

*Fitz Roy, Tragedy in the Supercouloir.* The United States-New Zealand Patagonian Expedition entered Argentina on October 22, after the Peruvian-Bolivian season, cruising in a yellow pick-up headed for Fitz Roy. We were intent on legendary Fitz Roy to be followed by exploits in the Paine group and Tierra del Fuego. I had proposed November as the most hopeful for a few days of benevolent sunshine. In that respect we were not to be disappointed. The members of the expedition that actually convened at the base of Fitz Roy were Steve McAndrews,

Kevin Carroll, David Kilcullen, Bill Martin, Noël Cox, Randy Udall and I. Mike Andrews and Gary Ball had yet to appear. After meeting with Carlos Comesaña, who had climbed the Supercouloir in 1965 with Fonrouge to make the second ascent of the mountain, we all agreed the only way was to go alpine-style: one or two ropes ready to climb like hell anytime the weather might clear. The end of the road is at the Río Fitz Roy. From there it is a day to a cabin base camp, and finally five hours more to the base of the couloir on the northwest side. By November 6 we were completely equipped with all our gear plus abundant cocoa, *frijoles* and instant ice cream for the anticipated three weeks' wait. But the wait never materialized. November 8 dawned clear and perfect. Unbelieving, we packed up and headed out. Steve McAndrews and I under heavy loads arrived atop the glacier that afternoon and stood below the route. The weather was perfect. We could not waste time. We selected our racks, our rations and our bedding and began. The Kiwis (New Zealanders), Kevin Carroll and Dave Kilcullen, arrived slightly later. They elected to spend one more night on level ground and were able to race up the ice and meet us for lunch the following day on the first rock pitch. We were together that night for a well anchored bivouac beneath the stillest and starriest of skies. On November 10 we passed the dihedral with mixed free and aid climbing, keeping almost exclusively to nuts. The hardest of the leads were all Steve's. With the exit to the ridge at hand, we settled into the bivouac muttering about, and dreading, the first clouds overhead. We were moving too slowly in our group of four. The decision to send two to the top, and two down, was made the next morning in the face of deteriorating weather and the need for speed. Steve McAndrews and Kevin Carroll went on; David Kilcullen and I descended in twenty rappels and down-climbed the steep snow in 13 hours, meeting Bill Martin and Randy Udall in support at the foot of the couloir. Clouds had crossed the peak, but still the sky was calm. Though a cave was ready, the four of us headed back to the cabin. Surprisingly, the 12th was as blue and spotless as the preceding days. The support team returned to the base of the mountain to await the descent of the summit team. There was no sign of them that day. The following morning their bodies were found on the snow beneath the couloir. It seems evident that they were bivouacking on the night of the 12th and were caught by heavy rockfall. (Kevin was wearing down booties.) We are sure that Steve and Kevin did reach the summit during those two days. It was quite possible that with route-finding problems it took them as long as two days to reach the final peak from the point David and I had last seen them during our descent. They may have left something on the summit that will be discovered by a future party. Unfortunately the camera was not among the few possessions recovered below.

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