

In Memoriam

RONALD E. FEAR

1943-1973

During the last few years, Ron's parents only saw glimpses of their son as he returned home from one expedition to exchange gear and clothes so he could leave on another. He managed to pack more expeditions into his 29 years than most climbers could hope to do in a lifetime. He would jet from Alaska to Peru and then come back to the U.S. to work for a few months and then leave again for the Himalayas. Yet he never seemed rushed; it was his nature to take things as they came. "Life will care for itself—therefore do not be too anxious," he wrote from 21,000 feet on Dhaulaghiri.

Ron was on his way to becoming one of the country's best expedition climbers and his crampons bit the ice of almost every continent on earth: Alaska, Peru, Europe and the Himalayas. He breathed the thin air from the summit of Dhaulaghiri II and returned two years later on the American Dhaulaghiri I expedition. Most of all he loved Peru. He left his footprints on top of 6 summits in that country, including 2 first ascents. But making a laundry list of Ron's summits would do no justice to his real reasons for climbing: his love for the sight and smells of foreign lands, trekking through the hills to be in the land of the snow giants, feeling their overawing greatness and enjoying the camaraderie of his fellow men and women in the mountains.

It seems ironic that his life was lost on a tributary of the Amazon River during a rafting trip. He had finished the climbing season in Peru and he wanted to warm up in the jungle and float the Urubamba River. A small waterfall was waiting for him and his companion, Walt Churchill, as they rounded a bend and were caught in the current of the river as it funneled to the falls. Unable to escape, they perished in the rocks at the base of the falls.

There is a part of Ron that lives on in all of us who knew him. You could not help but be affected by his perennial optimism. If he was on the expedition, you were insured high spirit and high morale for the entire trip. His joy of living out each day to its fullest was contagious. Just seeing "Fearless" made you feel good—his bearded, smiling face, matching rainbow colored balaclava and sweater, yellow pants, orange parka and red boots. His colorful, cheerful character is perhaps best described by his favorite word—"great." Every ice peak that loomed up as we would trek into a climb would be described by Ron with the exclamation "great!" Every colorful flower we found in an alpine meadow would

be "great!" and when he was with his friends on a climb that was the "greatest of all."

We are going to miss him. Climbing just won't quite be the same now. He was a rare, colorful alpine flower that has become extinct—he won't be there to brighten up the high places any more. And in the end I think we are the losers, not Ron.

RICHARD L. RIDGEWAY

NIELS-HENRIK LAPAIN ANDERSEN

1947-1973

The dream of Niels Andersen to climb the major north faces of the Alps was tragically shattered on the Matterhorn when he and Warren Bleser fell descending the Hörnli Ridge in storm. Last seen on the north face in mid-day on June 21, it is not known whether Niels and Warren completed the face climb or traversed to the ridge in an escape from the upper face. With a full awareness of Niels' fierce determination, I like to think they made it.

Niels was in the forefront of a new breed of American climber: one equally adapted to the most demanding climbs on rock or ice. A veteran of Yosemite and Squamish rock, Niels had turned increasingly the past three years to difficult ice climbing. His most remarkable achievement was the ascent of the east ridge and upper north face of Alaska's Mount Huntington—one of the world's magnificent ice fangs. In 1971 Niels had organized a group of climbers from the University of Washington to attempt Huntington's unclimbed east ridge. An avalanche nearly wiped out the expedition before it got on the mountain. Niels wanted to continue the climb but a majority of his companions were against it. With a new team he returned a year later to complete the route, surely one of the hardest Alaskan climbs yet made. Incredibly, Niels and his companions were able to climb the mountain in ten days—far less time than the two previous ascents.

Throughout the winter months of 1972-73 Niels and I planned for a summer expedition to Alaska. I was keenly disappointed when he told me he had decided to go to Europe instead. We both left Washington State the same day in June, he bound for the Matterhorn, Eiger, Grandes Jorasses and the others, I for the Fairweather range. For over two hours the night before we had talked of our hopes for the summer and parted with high expectations. Niels was also to have been one of two American representatives to the Rassemblement International in Chamonix, the biennial gathering of climbers from many countries.

Niels was a superb alpinist, but more, he was an exceptional young man and a good friend. He leaves his parents and sister, Birgitte. One of the more poignant memories I have of Niels was when, on a late night return from a climb, he expressed joy and delight about his father's in-