

Puchkov and Valery Khomutov, who got to the summit on May 9 at 11:30 A.M. Thus a total of eleven Soviet mountaineers climbed Mount Everest by the most difficult route ever ascended by Everest climbers.

*USSR Sports Committee*

*Mount Everest.* Our team members were Lloyd Gallagher, John Amatt, Tim Auger, Robert Baillie, Alan Burgess, James Blench, Dwayne Congdon, Jim Elzinga, Roger Marshall, Dave McNab, Pat Morrow, Dave Read, Gordon Smith, Laurie Skreslet, Don Serl and I as leader, supported by Dr. Steve Bezruchka, Dr. David Jones, Kurt Fuhrlich, Blair Griffiths, Bruce Patterson and Peter Spear. We left on July 26 for the walk to Base Camp. Most of the food and equipment had been sent in ahead in the pre-monsoon and was stored at Namche and Periche. Two members went ahead to set up Base Camp and by August 15 the team arrived at a fully established Base Camp. The Nepalese authorities had given permission to prepare the icefall and to carry to Camp I between August 20 and the start of the official season on September 1. We used the time well and by August 30 we had 120 loads at the site of Camp I. At 5:30 A.M. on August 31 an avalanche from the west shoulder swept away three Sherpas and four members. The Sherpas were buried and killed whilst the members survived with minor bruises apart from Spear who was completely buried and was dug out suffering from a wrenched back. Two days later tragedy struck again. Griffiths, the cameraman, was killed by a falling sérac in the icefall. The expedition reeled under these heavy blows and it was decided that everyone reconsider his commitment to the climb in view of the high level of danger in the icefall. Auger, Baillie, Blench, McNab, Elzinga and Serl decided to leave. Dave Jones also left as he was not acclimatizing. The remaining climbers were held up by bad weather for a week. Permission was granted to change from the South Pillar to the South Col and the New Zealand expedition on the Lhotse face agreed to cooperate with us between Camps II and IV. On September 16 Camp I was reoccupied at 19,600 feet. Conditions were good and progress was rapid, with Camp II occupied at 21,400 feet on September 22 and Camp III at 23,400 feet on the 28th. On October 4 Skreslet, Read and Sherpas Sundare and Lakpa Dorje occupied Camp IV on the South Col. The following day Skreslet and the two Sherpas climbed to the summit, returning to Camp II the same day. Two days later, Morrow, Pema Dorje and Lakpa Tsering also made the summit. Two climbers, Gallagher on the first attempt and Burgess on the second, were thwarted by faulty oxygen; the latter reached 27,500 feet without artificial oxygen. All climbers returned to Base Camp by October 8.