

Everest West Ridge Attempt. Our expedition was composed of Lluís Belvis, leader, Emili Civis, Manuel Mateu, Jordi Pons, Jaume Altadill, Oscar Cadiach, Narcis Serrat, Alfons Valls, Jordi Sugranyes, Xàxier Pérez Gil, Lluís Hortala, Josep Vidal Ponce, Antoni Llasera, Josep Casanovas, Francesc Sabat, Joan Ribas and me. The first group got to Base Camp on August 11. We reconnoitered and fixed ropes up the spur leading to the Lho La, following the Yugoslav route of 1979. We built an aerial tramway with a 5mm carrying cable, a 4mm traction cable, a 3-meter tower and a winch. This served between 19,000 feet and the Lho La at 19,850 feet and raised in all five tons to the Lho La. Early on September 7 we heard a terrific avalanche. A huge rock tower had crumbled and destroyed the final 650 feet of ropes and ladders of the route to the Lho La. The aerial tramway was not damaged. We found a new and easier route right of the Yugoslav one. On September 17 we established Camp II at 22,150 feet. The beginning of the route above Camp I was steep and we fixed ladders on an iced wall. On September 21 we placed Camp III at 23,450 feet near the top of the west shoulder. On September 27 we received word that Sherpa Lhakpa Tsering had died from a stomach perforation. This stopped progress while his body was evacuated and cremated. Camp IV was 1½ miles from, but only 1150 feet above, Camp III. Finally on October 6 four members slept there at 24,600 feet. Camp V was occupied at 26,575 feet on October 13 by Cadiach, Gil and Sherpa Nima Dorje. It was so cold (−45°C) that on the 14th their headlamps would not work and they had to wait until four A.M. to set out with oxygen in a cruel wind. At midday they reached 27,900 feet but realized they could not reach the summit that day. While Cadiach and Gil made a snow hole to leave their oxygen cylinders, Nima Dorje started the descent. While out of sight of our two top climbers but in the sight of members in Camp I, Nima Dorje slipped and fell down the north side to his death on the Rongbuk Glacier. With continuing strong winds, it was decided to abandon the attempt.

JOSEP MANUEL ANGLADA, *Centre Excursionista de Catalunya, Spain*

Mount Everest, Winter Attempt. Our expedition was led by Michel Metzger and composed of Marc Batard, Alain de Blanchaud, René Ghilini, Yves Laulan, Michel Mabilon, Michel Piola, Jean Bourgeois, Pierre-Alain Steiner, Emmanuel Schmutz and me. We got to Base Camp on November 21 and acclimatized until December 1. After eight days' work in the Khumbu Icefall, we got to 21,325 feet in the Western Cwm, but the icefall was in such bad shape that we asked for and were granted permission to change to the west ridge. Following the Yugoslavian route, we climbed to the Lho La in one day. We hauled loads with the Catalan winch, which was still in place. Camp I was in the col at 19,500 feet and Camp II at 23,000 feet. The winds were so strong that Batard and I could not get over 25,000 feet. Others wanted to make a final attempt. The Belgian Jean Bourgeois was accompanying four climbers on December 27 from the Lho La to Camp II. Fearing a headache and dizziness

were signs of an oncoming cerebral edema, he chose to descend alone. Wanting to lose altitude as quickly as possible and not daring to rappel from the Lho La, he descended on the Tibetan side, reaching finally the deserted, ruined Rongbuk Monastery and after several days the first village. Eventually he was taken to Shigatse, where he was interrogated. The authorities allowed him to proceed on January 11 and drove him to the Tibetan-Nepalese frontier at Kodari. Although winter floods had washed out a part of the road, he walked across this and caught a bus for Kathmandu. My companions had feared him dead in a crevasse and searched six days for him. After they had returned to Kathmandu, he finally turned up "from the dead."

LOUIS AUDOUBERT, *Club Alpine Français*

Everest Winter Ascent and Tragedy. Yasuo Kato, 33, was lost on Everest after becoming the first climber to reach the summit in a winter, solo attempt. His partner, Toshiaki Kobayashi, 34, who was following with bivouac supplies and met Kato just below the South Summit, also failed to return. This was Kato's third ascent of Everest. Kobayashi had been on expeditions to Dhaulagiri, K2 and Everest. The 7-man Japanese expedition accomplished its ascent in a very rapid 25 days. After establishing Base Camp on December 2, Kato reached the base of the South Col on December 22. In winter the main enemy is the frigid high-altitude jet stream which drops down to blast the mountain with force enough to send loose rocks sailing. Kato counted on the belief that the jet stream rises clear of the mountain every few weeks for two or three days. His plan was to launch an alpine-style attempt in that brief, calm period, with Kobayashi following in support. His first attempt on December 23 took him to 8100 meters before he was turned back by 50 to 60 kph wind and -40°C temperature. Kato could hardly keep upright, and the batteries of his radio froze within 15 minutes. Kato's next chance came on the 27th. Using oxygen, Kato and Kobayashi left Camp IV at five A.M. At ten A.M. climber Yoshimasa Sasaki caught Kato's transmission reporting they had reached 8400 meters and discovered the body of a climber (Frau Schmatz?). At 7:30 P.M. Kato reported the following: He had reached the South Summit at 1:50 P.M. and the summit at 3:55 P.M., at which time it was almost dark. On his descent he had met Kobayashi, who carried 27 kilos (60 pounds) of bivouac supplies to the agreed upon campsite just below the south summit. By then it was already pitch dark and very cold. Kobayashi was slightly frostbitten. Sasaki asked if Sherpas should be sent up to the South Col in preparation for a possible rescue. "No, that won't be necessary," Kato replied. "Both of us are well, and we've got a good bivouac. I'll call you tomorrow at seven A.M." Kato's voice sounded confident and in good spirits. In each of his other two Everest ascents he had bivouacked above 8000 meters without equipment. Now being fully prepared, he expected no difficulties. That night a terrific storm and cold wave blew in. The Indian Mountaineering Foundation forecast winds of 150 to 200 kph (!) at Everest altitude, and a temperature of -43°C . The resulting cold