

VI. Meanwhile Eric led *Full Bore* (WI V, 165 feet) across the valley. This single pitch of very big ice is especially impressive. Eric claimed it more difficult than *Rigid Designator*, yet easier than *The Fang* in Colorado. Eric, Jeff and Keith also climbed *Lone Wolf* (WI III, 1500 feet) just upstream from *Broken Dreams*. On January 7 and 8 Carl, Chuck, Eric and I climbed *Star Babies* (WI V +, 1000 feet) which offered four tiers ranging in length from 165 to 300 feet. Carl's lead on the second step was particularly spectacular with huge cauliflower ice bulges reminiscent of Colorado's Bridal Veil Falls. *Star Babies* also yielded one splendid campfire bivy. On January 7 Jeff and Keith climbed *Boys of Summer* (WI IV, 1000 feet) to the right of *Star Babies*. The day before flying out, Carl, Eric and I made the second ascent of *Full Bore* while Keith and Jeff climbed *Asian Lady* (WI II, 165 feet). In total the Alaskan Alpine Club Expedition to the Valley of the Pillars made six first ascents.

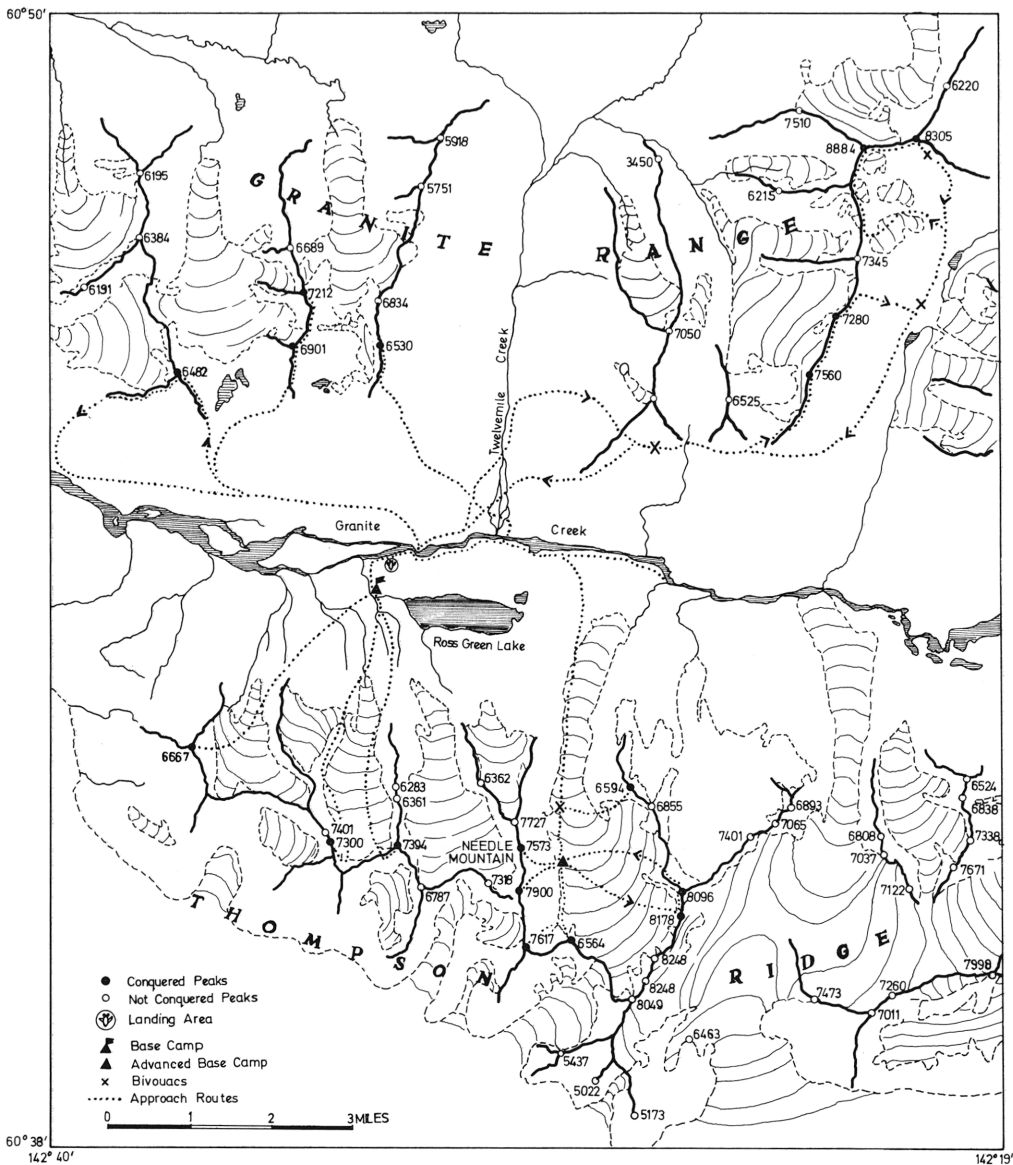
ROMAN DIAL

Polar Bear Peak, Northwest Face, Chugach Mountains. During beautiful weather and suprisingly mild temperatures, Charlie Sassara and I climbed Polar Bear Peak (6619 feet) during February 15 to 17. Believed to be only the third ascent of the mountain, this climb produced the first one in winter and the first ascent of its spectacular northwest face. Leaving the Eagle River Visitor Center at dawn, we hiked up the historic Iditarod Trail for six miles before crossing the open river to begin our bushwhack. We followed the drainage into a beautiful cirque where we were surrounded by impressive peaks and pocket glaciers. A nine-hour day left us on top of a steep snow slope below the rock shoulder of the northwest face with 3500 feet to go. We found an ideal bivouac site in a hollow formed by the wind. The following morning we climbed unroped with a full compliment of rock-and-ice hardware up the shoulder, following a series of snow ramps connected by verglased rock. This shoulder proved to be the key to the hanging glacier on the upper face. Once on the glacier, we climbed up to 55° snow to the summit pyramid. A pitch of verglas followed by a challenging chimney led us to the sharp summit four hours after starting. The view from the top was unbelievable with not a cloud seen over all of Alaska. We were able to see the long snow gully on the south side that led to the two prior ascents. After a rappel of the chimney, we down-climbed the rest of the pyramid and enjoyed a quick glissade down the glacier. Down-climbing the shoulder was no problem in our euphoric state. Following a second bivouac we descended the drainage following Heritage Creek to the river. We reached the visitor center in six hours.

STEVE DAVIS

Thompson Ridge Area, Chugach Mountains. On June 12 Jim Miller flew Bob Jacobs, Ole Kanestrom and me to the Thompson Ridge area. We landed on a sandy gravel bar near Ross Green Lake, where a Polish expedition had set up Base Camp. We joined them for a week of climbing in this spectacular wilderness. A Pole, Paweł Kubalski, climbed with us. Later that same day, the four of

ACTIVITIES OF POLISH EXPEDITION ALASKA '86
and
ST. ELIAS ALPINE GUIDES GROUP



us set out to establish Advance Base on an unnamed glacier which lies along the east face of Needle Mountain. We set up camp at 5000 feet early the next morning after climbing through the badly broken icefall all night. Due to snow conditions, we did all our climbing at night. Most of the couloirs began to avalanche around 9:30 A.M. On June 14 we left camp at midnight to ascend the northwest rib of P 8178. This peak lies on the ridge which is due east of Needle Mountain. We made our way through the crevasses and then through the séracs near the base of the rib. The snow rib was 45°, steepening to 55° or 60° a few hundred feet below the summit. On top we were greeted by a beautiful sunrise and panoramic views of the Bagley Icefield and all the way to Mount Logan to our east. We traversed the ridge from P 8178 to P 8096 to the north and descended its west ridge. On July 15 we ascended Needle Mountain (7573 feet) by the snow couloir on its east face to a col on the ridge just south of the summit spire. Bob Jacobs led the final 30 feet up the spire from which the peak gets its name. On June 16 we climbed the two southernmost of the three 8000-foot spires which lie just south of Needle Mountain. Again we ascended a steep couloir on the east face of the ridge. We returned to camp just before large avalanches wiped out our tracks. Jacobs and Kubalski also climbed P 6564 by its northwest face. Poles Czerwiński, Maczyński, Piekarczyk and Sobolewski had just climbed it from the east two hours earlier. On June 17 we descended to the Polish Base Camp. On the lower glacier it was exciting due to the rapid snow melt. Kubalski was unlucky enough to spend an hour extricating himself from a crevasse. On June 18 we climbed P 6667 by a snow couloir on its east face. Reaching a col just north of the summit, we followed the ridge to the summit. We believe that these were all first ascents except Needle Peak, P 6564 and P 6667, second ascents.

DANNY W. KOST, *Unaffiliated*

Thompson Ridge Area and Granite Ridge. In addition to the mountains mentioned above in Kost's report, the Poles climbed these peaks in the Thompson Ridge area: P 7394 via west ridge by Sławomir Maczyński and Andrzej Sobolewski on June 13; P 7401 via middle summit, which was reached by a ridge from the south, by Stanisław Czerwiński and Zdzisław Kosłowski on June 15; P 6594 via south face by Krzysztof Konarski and Dariusz Naszyński on June 16; and P 7617 via east couloir, a snow route up to 50°, by Czerwiński, Maczyński, Andrzej Piekarczyk and Sobolewski on June 18. In the Granite Range, they ascended the following: P 6530 via south ridge by Piekarczyk and American Ole Kanestrom on June 13; P 6901 from the south and P 7212 via south ridge by Kosłowski and Sobolewski on June 26; P 6482 from the south by Naszyński and Piekarczyk on June 26; P 7560 via south face and P 7280 via south ridge by Paweł Kubalski and Maczyński on June 26; and P 8884 (highest peak in the Granite Range) via southwest ridge and P 8305 via west ridge by Kubalski and Maczyński on June 27. All were first ascents. These peaks may be found on US Geological Survey sheets *Bering Glacier*, C-4, C-5, D-4 and D-5.

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