

Crossthwait, December 1984; *David Range*: Fang Peak (900 meters) unknown, Elliot (1300 meters) unknown, Coates (1280 meters) by J. Bennett, G. Mantin, R. Lachal, A. Varana, January 1966, Hordern (1510 meters) first ascent unknown, traverse over east peak and 10-meter-lower west peak by W. Williams, Crossthwait, December 1984.

WARWICK WILLIAMS, *Australia*

Vinson Massif, Sentinel Range. On November 24, our group reached the summit of the Vinson Massif. We were Pete Ackerman, Bob Failing, John Otter, Bill Martin, Mike Meyer, Dave Tollakson and I. The ascent commenced following our November 17 landing aboard our privately chartered Twin Otter aircraft piloted by Giles Kershaw. Due to poor weather, we were delayed four days in reaching the mountain following our initial Antarctic refueling stop at the Chilean Marsh Air Base on the Peninsula's King George Island. One further refueling at the Chilean Air Base at Cavajal on the Peninsula's Adelaide Island was also required before the final 3½-hour flight to Base Camp. From Base Camp at about 7500 feet we followed the original 1966 American route, establishing three intermediate camps before the final seven-hour summit push. Significant stormy weather did not materialize during our ascent, although one breezy day with accompanying poor visibility forced an aborted summit attempt on November 23. The lowest air temperature noted during our seven-day ascent was -36° F recorded at Base Camp, although summit weather, amid ultimately clear and slightly windy conditions, was probably much colder. Within two weeks following our descent, three other groups, one led by Adventure Network's Martyn Williams for Mountain Travel and others including Reinhold Messner and Hector MacKenzie were also successful in reaching the summit. It was Messner's seventh continental summit. By our reckoning, 53 persons have now summited the Vinson Massif.

PAUL PFAU

Vinson Massif. On November 27, Reinhold Messner, Wolfgang Tomaseth and I reached the highest point of Antarctica 26 hours after Giles Kershaw had landed us below the peak. The weather was wonderful and the climb, during which we slept at what is normally Camp II, was a real pleasure. Reinhold Messner thus became the second person, after Canadian Pat Morrow, to reach the highest summits of all the continents, considering Carstensz Pyramid the highest point in Australasia rather than insignificant Kosciuszko, which is the highest in Australia.

OSWALD OELZ, *Schweizer Alpen Club*

The Highest Summits of the Continents. In trying to calculate which are the highest summits of each of the continents, one must first figure whether *Australia* should be taken as a continent by itself or whether the islands of the Pacific

should be included in *Australasia*. The highest summit of Australia is Kosciuszko (2230 meters, 7318 feet). The highest point in Australasia is Carstensz Pyramid (given both as 5030 meters, 16,503 feet and 4884 meters, 16,023 feet) on the island of New Guinea. If the islands are excluded, clearly Dick Bass was the first to climb all the highest points. If the islands are included, Canadian Pat Morrow was the first. He made the following ascents: McKinley, June 9, 1977; Aconcagua, February 9, 1981; Everest, October 7, 1982; Elbrus, July 25, 1983 and July, 1986; Kilimanjaro, August 17, 1983; Vinson Massif, November 19, 1985; and Carstensz Pyramid, May 7, 1986. Reinhold Messner is the second to complete the list which has Australasia in it: Carstensz Pyramid, 1971; Aconcagua, 1974, McKinley, 1976; Kilimanjaro, 1978; Everest, 1978; Elbrus, 1983; Vinson Massif, November, 1986.

EUROPE

Czechoslovakian Exchange. A climbing exchange should show you more than just new climbers and new crags. It is equally important to live a new lifestyle. In a Socialist country there is no shortage of rules to keep you in line every step; as if there weren't enough to worry about on those frightening sandstone towers. Alan Bartlett, Charles Fisher and David Knox arrived a week before I did. They were well entertained by our principal hosts: Vladimír Weigner, Petr Brzák and Standa Vaněk. Sightseeing in Prague and climbing on local limestone cliffs were punctuated with rain. When I arrived on September 3, the terror started immediately at Adrspach-Teplice. We just were not used to 20- to 40-foot runouts on sandstone covered with ball bearings. Watching the Czechs run up those towers in their authentic bedroom slippers didn't do much for the ego, until you realized that all shoes work the same on this funky rock. The Czechs climbed beautifully where we struggled to follow in marginal style. But the routes were steep, strenuous and committing. Our little group doubled in size with the arrival of Todd and Holly Skinner, Beth Wald and Dan Michael, who were on their way to the Soviet Union for the World Speed Climbing Championships. They brought with them to the Teplice Film Festival the film, *On the Rocks*, which was a tremendous success. Just a word about the Czech climbing culture: I refer of course to the pub or *pohovinstnu*, which we translated as "nasty, smoky, overcrowded, loud pub." The Czechs have a saying: "As you drink, so shall you climb!" But it is not everywhere that you get to meet the man who has climbed K2 twice. Their climbing serves a real purpose: it is the one chance to express themselves in a society where free speech is a rare luxury. We moved on to Turnov and the climbing in the nearby Český Raj ("Czech Paradise"). The climbing on the sandstone towers was unique because we could actually use real gear. And we used it liberally. We also saw a 16-year-old hardman throw a dynamic up and out a good sized roof, first try, no sweat, hang-by-a-hand and howl. Leaving Turnov, our little group saw a drastic reduction. Fisher headed home to teach his NOLS course and Knox left to keep