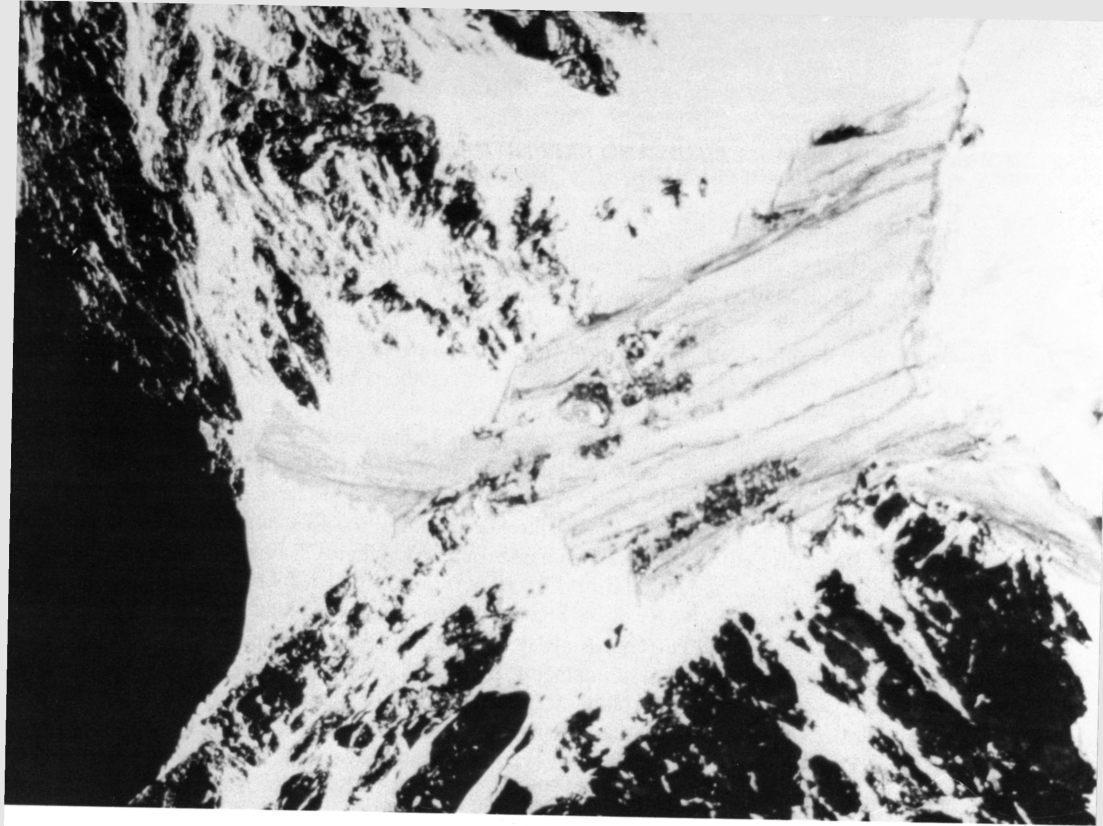


## Pakistan

*K2, South-Southwest Ridge Attempt and Tragedy.* Our expedition reached Base Camp on May 31 and took its place in line on the moraine of the Godwin Austen Glacier. We found ourselves among nine expeditions on the south side and four expeditions on the unclimbed south-southwest ridge. This concentration of climbers was initially dismaying, but the collection of Who's Who in Himalayan climbing, past and present, provided an interesting backdrop to our attempt, as we spent many days in Base Camp in foul weather. Our group consisted of eight climbers from the Pacific Northwest, Base-Camp manager Chelsea Monike and liaison officer Major Mobshir Hussain Tarar, who, as senior army officer in the Base Camp, provided counsel to other expeditions' liaison officers as climbers shuffled from one route to another. On June 3 we set up Camp I at the head of the De Filippi Glacier. From June 6 to 9, John Smolich, leader, Brian Hukari, Kerry Ryan and I fixed 1000 meters of line on the Negrotto Face to the saddle at 6300 meters. Andy Politz and Jon Sassler occupied Camp II on the saddle the next day. Bad weather drove us all to Base Camp on the 11th. On June 18 we started again to build up Camp II and while the rest of us ferried loads, Politz and Ryan helped the Italians fix line to Camp III at 6800 meters. Camp III was reached on June 20. That evening Murray Rice, Politz, Ryan and Dassler stayed in Camp II, Hukari and I descended all the way to Base Camp and Smolich and Al Pennington remained in Camp I, planning to do another carry the next morning. On June 21 at 5:30 A.M. a boulder fell from the south-southwest ridge just above Camp II and started an avalanche on the Negrotto Face. Smolich and Pennington had left Camp I about 20 minutes before and were caught in it as they started up the face. Hukari and I found Pennington's body near the surface three hours later. We carried him to the Gilkey Memorial the next morning and held a service attended by the international community. We found no trace of Smolich. The slab depth at the starting zone was two or three feet, but at the base it was 15 to 20 feet. It scoured the slope to blue ice. We abandoned the route and the expedition as our permit was specifically for the south-southwest ridge. Ours was the only expedition on the south side that did not start on, or send one or more members to, the Abruzzi Ridge. Probably as a result, we were the only expedition on the south side not to reach the summit. The Polish expedition on our route took over our fixed line to Camp III and our tents, rope and food in Camp II. They completed the previously unclimbed route in early August. Considering the small windows of good weather which they had, most certainly our work on the lower half of the route was instrumental in their success, and so we share their feeling of victory on what Renato Casarotto had referred to as the most difficult route in all the Himalaya and Karakoram.

STEVE BOYER

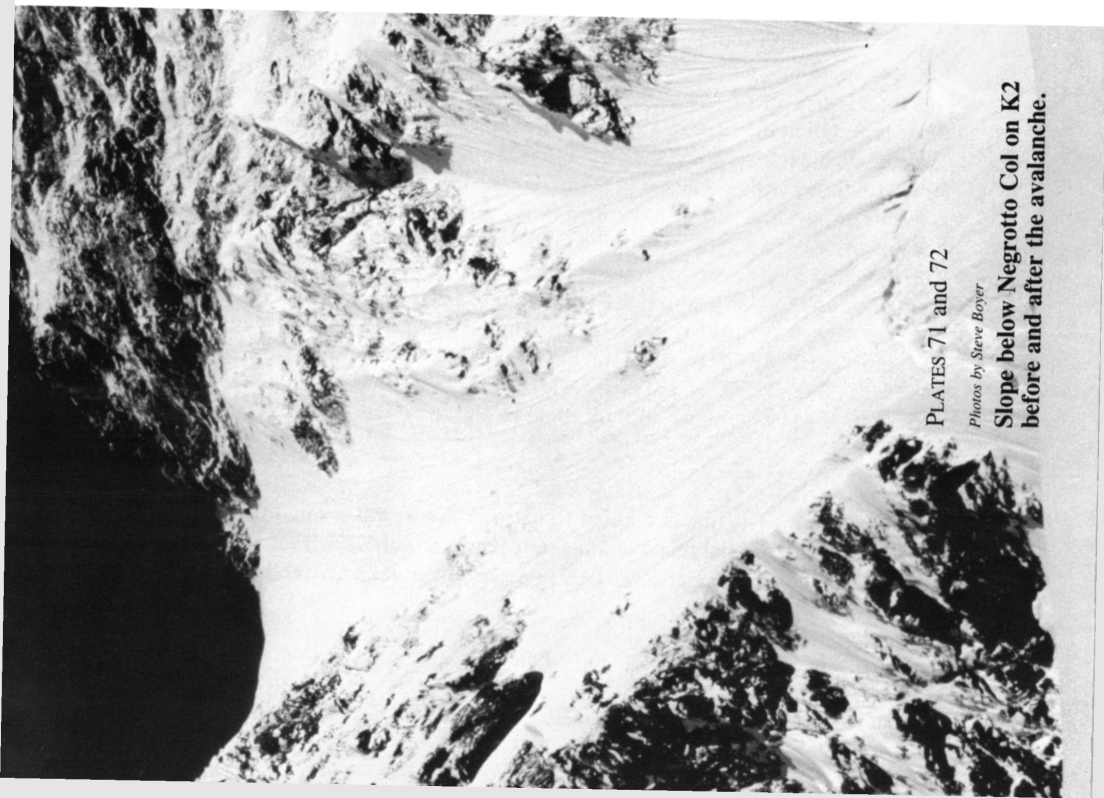
*K2 Tragedy.* The Italian climber Renato Casarotto was trying to climb solo the long, then still unclimbed south-southwest ridge of K2 with a slight deviation to the right in the upper part. A first attempt ended at 8200 meters about



PLATES 71 and 72

*Photos by Steve Boyer*

**Slope below Negrotto Col on K2  
before and after the avalanche.**



June 23. A second try reached a similar height about July 5. In his third attempt, in mid July, he reached a little higher, about 8300 meters but decided to withdraw in view of the weather, playing safe as usual. He descended the whole length of the ridge to the foot of the mountain and the De Filippi Glacier where on July 16 he was watched by Kurt Diemberger as he fell into a crevasse only about an hour's walk from Base Camp. The crevasse was about 40 meters deep. He managed to get out his radio from his rucksack and call his wife who was at Base Camp and had been told by Diemberger to turn the radio on. He whispered, "Goretta, I am dying in a crevasse near Base Camp." She organized a search party from the Italian, British and German expeditions nearby, including their doctors. Very soon they found him in the bottom of the crevasse, still alive. After lifting him to the surface, all efforts of the doctors were useless and he died soon afterwards. Following the wishes of his wife, his body was placed back to rest in the crevasse. This is a great loss for Italian mountaineering and a cruel blow for Goretta Casarotto, who has always accompanied him in far-away expeditions and given him priceless moral and practical support on all his solo climbs. She accompanied him in 1985 when together they reached the summit of Gasherbrum II.

XAVIER EGUSKITZA, *Pyrenaica, Bilbao, Spain*

K2. After a period of acclimatization, two Basques, Mari Abrego and Jo-sema Casimiro, officially members of Renato Casarotto's expedition but climbing independently, made a swift, illegal ascent of the Abruzzi Ridge of K2 in a five-day alpine-style push. In a period of good weather, they moved up each day, carrying their tent and all necessary food, fuel and gear. They went up to Advance Base, Camps I, II, III and IV at 5250, 6050, 6750, 7400 and 8150 meters from June 18 to 22. In still excellent weather on June 23 they climbed the "Bottleneck and got to the summit just after the Barrards, Michel Parmentier and Wanda Rutkiewicz. They took five days to make the descent in bad weather, arriving at Base Camp on June 27. They were accompanied part of the way down by Wanda Rutkiewicz.

GREGORIO ARIZ, *Club Anaitasuna, Spain*

K2, *Women's Ascents and Tragedy*. French climbers Michel Parmentier, Maurice and Liliane Barrard were joined by Pole Wanda Rutkiewicz. Both women had already climbed two 8000ers. Apparently the expedition was not a happy one from the beginning. Maurice Barrard lost the expedition's funds, passports and airline tickets in Rawalpindi. They reached Base Camp at the end of May. According to other climbers on the mountain there was little harmony among them from the start. In early June they got to 7000 meters and descended to wait out nine days of storm. They set out again on June 18 but progress up the mountain was slow. Above the fixed ropes and Camp III, Liliane Barrard was having considerable difficulty. They moved unroped. She took three or four hours before she would move up over a sérac. On June 22 all four bivouacked