

P 5800 (Goodwill Peak) and Chottukay (P 5823), Muzkol, East Pamirs, Tadjikistan. No sooner did the helicopter drop us in Muzkol than the Tadjiki government closed all the borders. Of course we did not know that at the time. We then made two first ascents. Sergei Arsentiev, Dimitri Timoshenko, Viktor Leonov, Luba Matveicheva (f), Billy Mason and I climbed P 5800, which we called Peak Goodwill. The mountain lies immediately west of P 6233 (Soviet Officers' Peak), the highest in the range. Later Sergei Arsentiev and I climbed Chottukay (5823 meters, 19,105 feet). This lies farther south on the west bank of the Pshart River. The helicopter service finally got permission to collect us, but a week later than scheduled. We each had one slice of salami and a few bread crumbs left. The Muzkol range lies 100 kilometers southeast of Pik Kommunizma. Access is limited by high mountains on the east, deserts to the north and south and Sarez Lake to the west. There are 11 summits higher than 6000 meters, of which only three have been climbed, and 30 between 5500 and 5999 meters. The range was first mentioned in the diary of Marco Polo during his travels on the Silk Road, which passed through Muzkol until the beginning of the 20th century. In 1911, an enormous earthquake caused landslides in the Murgab River valley. A natural dam formed, creating the 70-kilometer Sarez Lake. The lake's steep banks make the area inaccessible to caravans. After 1913, the region was virtually deserted and forgotten until 1949, when Soviet topographers visited the area. The region was strictly off-limits to any visitors. The first climbers, a team from the Leningrad Sport Club of the Soviet Army, made the first mountaineering expedition in 1986. They were awarded the prize for the "Best Summit in the USSR" with their ascent of Pik Bitkaya (6074 meters). The granite walls of Pik Bitkaya, Pik Nymra and P 6148 are comparable to those of El Capitan, although they rise to much higher altitudes.

FRANCES DISTEFANO

Irian Jaya

Carstensz Pyramid. On April 22, Glenn Porzak, Chris Pizzo, Chris Kopczynski, Gerry Roach, Dave Graber, Wayne Hutchens and I flew to Biak, an island off the mainland, and then to the town of Nabire on the north coast. A 1½-hour charter flight took us to Ilaga, a small hamlet at 7000 feet completely cut off from the outside world by hundreds of miles of roadless jungle. We spent several days organizing Dani porters and buying enough sweet potatoes to feed them during the trip. The seven-day trek to Base Camp was filled with rain, mud, bog, rain, more mud, naked natives, rain and more mud. The Carstensz Range contains a dozen or so peaks over 14,000 feet and a considerable expanse of glacier. Carstensz Pyramid is a dramatic limestone peak with 2000 vertical feet of relief and no easy way up. Our climb took 12 hours and included one 5.8 pitch, eight or so roped pitches of 5.2 to 5.4 and several sections of third- and fourth-class climbing. The route gains the right-hand ridge and then follows a very impressive ridge to the top. After a rest day, we also climbed Sunday