

conditions were variable but generally tricky and dangerous. Most of the face was 50°; the average inclination of the whole route was 45°.

JÓZEF NYKA, *Editor, Tatarnik, Poland*

Mount Foraker, Ski Descent of the Sultana Ridge. On May 28, Julie Faure, Jim Hopkins, and I assembled at Kahiltna Base Camp to attempt to climb Mounts Foraker and Crosson and descend both on freeheel skis. Montecucco and Hopkins warmed up with an attempt of Mount Hunter's West Ridge. They were turned back by a heavy storm. Faure and I reached 18,000 feet and 16,000 feet, respectively, on separate West Buttress (Denali) acclimatizing expeditions. We climbed at night from our camp at the foot of Crosson's Southeast Ridge to avoid soft snow and clouds. Montecucco and I skied a supportable crust from 8,500 feet (our first cache) back to camp at 6,800 feet. May 31 we again climbed at night, moving camp to a flat spot on the ridge at 11,200 feet. A pair of 60° loose rock chimneys, ably led by Montecucco, were the crux of this section. Great views of Denali, Foraker, and Hunter made this a special camp.

On June 1 Hopkins, Montecucco, and I skied damp powder under blue skies down to retrieve our cache of food and fuel at 8,500 feet. Six inches of new snow fell overnight, and we didn't leave camp until 4 p.m. on June 2. The route went easily up and over Crosson, and we cached at a col just before Peak 12,472. Skiing from the 12,800-foot summit of Crosson was spectacular and powdery.

By June 9 we had negotiated the airy, crevassed, foggy, undulating three-mile-long access ridge. We established our high camp at 12,000 feet, at the foot of the Sultana Ridge. June 10 we departed for the summit at 10:30 p.m. when the whiteout finally cleared. It was breezy, but we found the climbing fast and easy. We cramponed up relatively crevasse-free 30° to 40° sastrugi slopes. At 16,000 feet we were suddenly enveloped by a lenticular cloud and winds rose to 50 to 100 mph. Hopkins had led nearly the whole way, and he turned around with Montecucco, who was feeling the altitude, at 16,800 feet — the summit plateau. Julie and I, following on a separate rope, continued to 17,100 feet. The actual summit was a quarter-mile away and 300 feet higher. We sacrificed it and began skiing from 17,000 feet in gusty, but slightly decreasing winds. Montecucco was not himself due to AMS, though he had previously been the strongest member of the team. The snow was carvable, but an incredible gust blasted him off his skis in mid-hop-turn at 16,000 feet. Gaining speed immediately after landing on his back, he slid 2,000 feet, bouncing 30 to 50 feet over seracs. He self-arrested with the ice hammer attached to his ski pole, one foot from where the glaciated ridge calves onto the massive north face.

Hopkins reached him within about 30 minutes. Montecucco was disoriented initially, but after accepting warm layers and fluids, he became alert.

Julie and I reached the pair after an hour. John handled himself well after taking painkillers, and we moved him to high camp in a few hours. The weather cleared and calmed beautifully in the afternoon of June 11, and John was successfully rescued by a Chinook helicopter. In Talkeetna he was diagnosed with a broken ankle and bruised ribs, from which he has recovered. Faure, Hopkins, and I descended with John's gear over the next two days, and flew out after a weather day at Kahiltna Base.

TYSON BRADLEY, *unaffiliated*

Mount Foraker and Mount Crosson. On June 2, Doug Geeting flew Paul Barry, Jacques Boutet, Ron Rickman and me to the southeast fork of the Kahiltna Glacier, east of Foraker (17,400 feet). Our goal was the seven-mile-long Sultana Ridge, via Mount Crosson (12,800 feet). We placed camps at 10,100 feet and 11,300 feet on the Southeast Ridge of Crosson, at 11,700 feet in the prominent col west of Crosson, at 11,300 feet along the ridge, and at 12,100 feet at the base of Foraker's final summit ridge. Paul, Jacques and I summited on June 13. Two days later we were flown back to Talkeetna.

DAVID HART, *Mountaineering Club of Alaska*

Mount Hunter, The Mystic Jewel. At midnight on June 19, Calvin Herbert, Mike Colocino and I climbed the initial 2,000 feet of *Rattle and Hum* to a protected bivouac and the beginning of our route on Mount Hunter's North Face. The climbing had been exposed to serac fall and huge avalanches so we were all quite relieved to be in a safe position. The next day, I led a 500-foot block of 70° ice over two tricky bergschrunds to the base of a steep couloir that defines the middle portion of the route. Calvin began leading up the couloir only to be greeted by a thunderous torrent of spindrift. He was barely able to hold on to his tools and place a screw and lower off. Shaken and distraught, we down climbed back to the previous bivouac. We began climbing the following day at 5 p.m. and just before reaching our previous high point Calvin was struck by a solitary ice brick in the back of the neck, causing us all to fear for our safety and carefully evaluate the situation at hand. Calvin broke a long, anxious silence by murmuring that it would be more dangerous to descend than to continue, then grabbed the rack of 15 ice screws and bolted up the couloir.

We swung leads for 2,500 feet of 70° to 90° ice climbing until Calvin found a bergschrund bivouac inside a 75° ice arête at 12,000 feet. The next

The North Face of Mount Hunter. Routes, from left to right: Northeast Ridge (Takahashi-Sasada-Kosaka-Suzuki-Hamada, 1971); North Buttress Couloir (Grison-Tedeschi, 1984); *Wall of Shadows* (Child-Kennedy, 1994); *WPOD Route* (Bibler-Klewin, 1983, showing Newsom Start, 1980, near bottom of Buttress); *Moonflower Buttress* (finishing at top of last rockband on Buttress, Stump-Aubrey, 1981, showing *Moonflower Variation* to left of *WPOD*, midway up Buttress); *Deprivation* (Backes-Twight, 1994); West-of-North Buttress (Ireland-Bjornborg, 1980); Lowe-Kennedy Direct Start (Smith-Teare, 1993); Lowe-Kennedy Route (Lowe-Kennedy, 1971); *Mystic Jewel* (follows 2,000 feet of *Rattle and Hum*, Byerly-Colocino-Hebert, 1995); *Rattle and Hum* (Anker-Shaw, 1989). *Gardner Heaton illustration.*