

the second group of climbers arrived in Base Camp on June 25. Toubbeh, the team physician, departed with trekkers for Skardu the following day. The reinforced team quickly established Camp 2 and, during sporadic breaks in the poor weather, worked with Dutch team members and high altitude porters to fix lines through the Black Pyramid and establish Camp 3 at just under 24,000 feet on July 15. The team planned to use Camp 4 only as a temporary resting point on their way to the summit. After resting in Base Camp for three days, the team made several aborted summit attempts due to poor weather conditions. At one point, it snowed for 11 consecutive days. While the weather appeared reasonable just down the glacier on Broad Peak, storm conditions persisted above 7000 meters on K2. The entire team made a push to clear the fixed lines and prepare the camps for one more summit attempt. Johnston and Cooney created a trench to Camp 3 and dug out the tents there, which were destroyed under seven feet of fresh snow. Then, along with the remaining team members except Slater, they called for porters to begin the hike out on August 6 due to commitments at home. Slater planned to stay and make another attempt along with a New Zealand team which had also established camps on the ridge. At the last minute Hargreaves decided to stay and climb with Slater and the Kiwis as well.

On August 13, Slater and Hargreaves left Camp 4 for the summit in good weather at 1 a.m. Along with members of the Kiwi team, they joined up with four members of a Spanish team (one of whom turned back later in the morning) below the Bottleneck. Radio calls to Base Camp indicate that between 6 p.m. and 7 p.m., all seven climbers in this international team summited. A fierce wind began blowing out of China at about 8 p.m. that evening and none of the summit climbers was heard from again. Two Spanish climbers who had survived the night at Camp 4, but sustained severe frostbite, found articles of clothing belonging to Hargreaves at about 7400 meters during their descent the next day. They could also discern three distinct tracks coming off the summit ridge and a body was visible in the distance. It is surmised that the climbers were literally blown off the mountain.

On a positive note, the American team was able to clear approximately two tons of accumulated trash from Base Camp, and established a biologically safe method to dispose of human waste on the glacier.

KEVIN COONEY

*K2, Ascent and Tragedy.* A seven-member Spanish expedition led by Jose Garces attempted K2 by the south-southeast spur. The account of their successful and subsequently tragic expedition as told to Xavier Eguskitza appears earlier in this journal.