

Bagley Icefield to the south. The ridgeline to the north continues up to the plateau at over 14,000 feet between Aello Peak and Mount Bona. The exposure of over 6,000 feet to the Hawkins glacier to the south and west, combined with the cornices and snow mushrooms, made this climb to the summit more than worthwhile. For future visitors to this basin, this peak is highly recommended for the inspirational views from the summit.

DANNY KOST

*Mount Natazhat, Northeast Ridge.* On April 9, Paul Barry, Harry Hunt, Dave Lucey and myself made the second ascent of Mount Natazhat (13,435 feet) by a new route. The first ascent was made from the south in 1913 by Canadian members of the International Boundary Survey while they were surveying the US-Canada border. Our new route was via the northeast ridge, which we rated Alaska Grade IV-. We spent six days round trip climbing alpine style from our 7,600-foot Base Camp.

Camps I and II were located in prominent cols along the ridge at 8,800 feet and 9,300 feet respectively. Our high camp was in a crevasse at 10,600 feet, only one-and-a-half miles from the summit.

The crux of the route was between Camps II and III, where knife-edge terrain and tremendous exposure required our full attention. Our high camp was located just above these twelve pitches of delicate snow and ice climbing.

Summit day presented continuous 30- to 50-degree snow and ice slopes as well as some more knife-edge traversing. We enjoyed beautifully clear and calm weather during our entire 11-hour summit day. Our view from the top seemed limitless. We could see all the way from Mounts Saint Elias and Logan to Mounts Blackburn and Sanford, a distance of 200 miles.

We descended our route back to Base Camp during two more days of careful downclimbing. We left no fixed gear on the mountain.

DAVID HART, *Mountaineering Club of Alaska*

*Mount Bear, Ascent, and South to North Traverse.* Our superb pilot, Paul Claus, of Ultima Thule Outfitters, dropped the three of us (Ruedi Homberger, Hansueli Brunner and I) off May 12, 1995, on the glacier system that drains the south side of Mount Bear (approx. 10,700'). We skied up a nearby 11,000-foot-plus peak in the afternoon sun near the landing site. That evening we prepared our gear for an early morning start up the long and gentle glaciers that lead up into the south-facing cirque formed by Mount Bear's horseshoe-shaped summit ridge. We began the next day by descending about 1,000 feet down and west along the subsidiary glacier we had landed on. Where it joined the main Mount Bear glacier (approx. 9,500') we turned right (north) and began the ascent toward the peak. After two days of perfect weather and straight-forward ascending on skis, we were camped at 14,000 feet at the entrance of the small cirque below and to the east of the main summit. We elected to make a late afternoon acclimatization excursion that same day up the 35-degree headwall on the right side of the cirque to the rounded and easy-angled ridge crest. Very strong winds blew from the south as soon as we topped the ridge. After taking a quick look at the layout of glaciers on the north side of the mountain, we tried to calculate our next day's descent over terrain unknown to us. Ruedi and Hans decided to descend to our tents since we would be coming up early again the next morning. Doubtful of the next day's weather, I used the remaining light to sprint to the summit of Bear (on the opposite side of the horseshoe-shaped ridge) alone. (I wanted to take no chances with the conditions the next day!) It was about an hour away. I reached the top around 6 p.m. in winds gusting to about 50-60 m.p.h. By 7:30



*Ruedi Homberger on Mt. Bear. Carlos Buhler*

p.m. I was back at the tent.

On the third morning, we dragged our toboggans up the headwall as bad weather moved in rapidly. We kept thinking we could beat the storm and descend the north slopes before the tempest settled in on the peak and cut our visibility. We were wrong. The three of us became pinned down on the summit horseshoe ridge only about 500 horizontal yards from where Ruedi and Hans had turned around on the previous day. Though I had covered this ground the evening before on the way to the top, I was unable to navigate in the whiteout. We had even lost our way trying to return along the broad horseshoe ridge to the headwall we had just come up!

Blinded by the storm and numbed by the cold winds, we were forced to put up our tent a few feet down the north slope of the wide ridge and wait for a break in the storm. It was about 2 p.m. Once inside the buffeted tent, we shared a sense of relief and expressed the feeling that we had been overconfident of our ability to navigate our way off the peak with map and compass. I felt foolish to have climbed into the mess in the first place.

In any event, all was well until Ruedi began to feel sick. Within seven hours, he was developing certain symptoms of high altitude pulmonary edema. Still pinned down by the storm, we had no choice but to calculate how long we dared wait before we would have to make a dash for lower terrain in the blind, bitter cold and wind-swept night.

At very first light, about 4 a.m., we decided to move. The visibility had improved. We put Ruedi on his skis and divided up the gear between Hans and myself. Ruedi was barely able to stand. It was only a lifetime on skis that enabled him to stay in balance and turn.

At first, we attempted to return the way we had ascended the day before. However, within a few minutes we changed our minds. Ruedi was incapable of taking even 10 steps over a small rise. The better choice—maybe the only choice—was to descend directly to the north,

by any route possible.

During the next nine hours Hans and I probed and navigated our way down the most direct line we could ski on the glacier systems on the north side of Mount Bear. Ruedi gave every last ounce of strength he had to follow us on his skis. He knew his life depended on it.

By mid-morning we were aided tremendously as a small amount of Ruedi's strength and level of lucidity began slowly returning. By 1:30 p.m., we had managed to descend about 5,000 feet from our bivouac site at approximately 15,200 feet. Our route had taken us down a series of glacier systems on the northern flanks of Mount Bear. Our final position was unplanned and, of course, unannounced to Paul, our pilot.

Ruedi confided that evening that had we spent another night up high, he would have died. This was his second experience with high altitude disease over a lifetime of mountaineering achievements.

Our unusual location and the bad weather kept Paul searching for three days before he found us on the 19th. By this time, Ruedi had improved enormously. He could walk around normally a few feet from the tent. His full strength, however, did not return for several weeks. Ruedi, in his mid-fifties, will undoubtedly continue to climb for many years. Yet each of us will allow for a few more days of acclimatization on our mountain ascents. We cut it a little too close this time and nearly paid the price.

CARLOS BUHLER

*Mount Anderson, First Ascent.* Mount Anderson (10,972 feet), in the St. Elias Mountains, lies at the junction of the Tittmann and Anderson glaciers only two miles from the Canadian border. It is named for one of the members of the American boundary survey party that visited the region. I had first explored the possibility of climbing this mountain in the fall of 1988 after spending years studying the history of the Wrangell-St. Elias National Park and the survey work that took place along the border in the early 1900s. During my research, I had found photographs of not only the members with large alpenstocks, but horses on the Anderson Glacier itself. Interestingly enough, a boundary party visited the Anderson Glacier region in 1913, climbed P. 9630, and reached over 7,000 feet on Mount Anderson itself. At that time, they named a number of the mountains including Mounts Tittmann, Anderson, and George. My first attempt to climb the mountain failed in April, 1994, due to avalanche conditions high on the mountain. In August of the same year I walked in from the Ram Glacier some 20 miles distant, but failed on the upper ridge due to a rock gendarme that I did not wish to climb without rock protection. In May, 1995, we failed again due to a snow storm that created bad avalanche conditions on the upper 2,000 feet.

In 1996 I was back once again to make another try. I had planned to climb the route alone, but Ruedi Homberger and Stefan Wyss from Switzerland were in Alaska and had heard of my planned trip to the St. Elias Mountains. We decided to go in together and had Paul Claus of Ultima Thule Outfitters fly us in. On May 26, Paul landed us on the bare ice of the main Tittmann Glacier at around 5,200 feet with his Super Cub. We skied up to 6,200 feet at the base of an icefall on the southwest side of the mountain and set up camp. We immediately skied through the icefall to explore a route through the seracs and crevasses to about 7,200 feet. The next day, May 27, we left camp at 4 a.m., retraced our steps through the icefall, then skied through the upper basin to a col at approximately 8,900 feet. Here we left our skis and proceeded up the south ridge, where we reached the main summit at around 10:30 am. We had tremendous views of Mounts Logan, St. Elias, Miller, Bona, Churchill, University, Bear and hundreds of unnamed peaks. The