

CORDILLERA DE LOS ANDES

Cerro Cuerno, Southwest Face, First Romanian Ascent. On February 19 and 20, C. Lacatusu and O. Batar made the first Romanian ascent of Cerro Cuerno (5462 m) via the southwest face with on bivouac 70 meters below the summit. It was a very nice route. We climbed up an ice couloir, then a snow field, snow and ice face, mixed face, rock face and again mixed climbing on this splendid peak situated just to the north of Aconcagua.

CONSTANTIN LACATUSU, *Lynx Alpin Club*

Aconcagua, Ascent and Attempt. Todd Hoffman, Tom Douglas, and I summited Aconcagua via the normal route at 2 p.m. on January 31, having spent a total of eight days on the mountain. After acclimatizing on the normal route, Todd Hoffman, Gabe Schlumberger, Tom Douglas, and I planned to climb the French Direct Route on the south face of Aconcagua, but retreated due to poor conditions on the route. Because of very low precipitation the preceding winter, the snow cover was twenty feet less than normal on the south face, leaving the Slovenian start to the FDR an unclimbable rubble of loose rock and mud as steep as 70 degrees. One team before us (nationality unknown) backed off the Slovenian start, and instead climbed the Argentine traverse followed by the Messner finish (in seven days). The only other attempt on the south face on record at Park Headquarters was a solo climber (nationality unknown) who went missing and was presumed dead after one week.

Since this was the 100th anniversary of the first ascent of the mountain, Aconcagua was very crowded this year; when we arrived at the Plaza de Mulas base camp, we counted 125 tents. Because of very low snowfall the preceding year, the route was almost all rock (we climbed the entire route without crampons or ice axes). During our week on the mountain, there was almost no precipitation, although the wind regularly blew up to 70 m.p.h. and temperatures dropped as low as -20°F late in the day. Four climbers (nationalities unknown) died while we were on the mountain, three on the normal route (one of a heart attack at the Plaza de Mulas, one at Nido de Condores of cerebral edema, and one of exhaustion and exposure at the Canaleta), and one on the South Face (presumably from a fall).

AUTHOR UNKNOWN

Four-legged Climber on Aconcagua. A bizarre ascent was performed by a dog of unknown pedigree in Aconcagua. This "climber" joined a group of Europeans from Laguna Horcones. He then disappeared and later joined Austrian Armin Liedl in the Berlin Hut (6000 m). The dog had climbed through precarious conditions that included temperatures of -20° C. He bivouacked in the open. Reaching the Independencia Hut (6500 m), Cumbre, as the dog was named, began to bark; he had seen a climber in bad condition, who was then rescued along with another companion. On January 1995 they summited. The dog slept with them in Independencia and the next day disappeared. The Austrian said he would search for him and take him to his country.

This isn't the first dog on Aconcagua. The Austrian Link, who made various ascents to Aconcagua in the 1940s, summited with Fifi, who died with him on the mountain. A dog named Prince also summited Aconcagua. It's not so rare that climbers of South America summit with dogs.

MARCELO SCANU, *Buenos Aires, Argentina*