

Rakekniven, First Ascent. It was reported that Conrad Anker and Alex Lowe climbed an aspect called the Snow Petrol Wall on Rakekniven, an overhanging, Cerro Torre-like granite needle in the Filchner Mountains of Queen Maud Land, Antarctica. Other team members were Jon Krakauer, Rick Ridgway and Gordon Wiltsie. In a deplorable move, National Geographic and The North Face, the team's sponsors, have refused to release photos or further details on the climb until they can publish them first. (*Rock and Ice* 79)

Mount Scott, Southwest Face. It was reported that in 1996, Americans Alex Lowe and Skip Novak, in Antarctica as part of a film project, managed on their time off to complete an ice route up the 830-meter Mount Scott in the Penola Straights just south of the LeMaire Channel. The pair started up a large couloir to the right of the Central Buttress on the southwest face, then followed an icy runnel through the rock above to gain a snow ridge leading to the summit. The climb took nine hours round-trip and was given a grade of Alpine TD- with a Scottish 4 crux. (*High Mountain Sports* 169)

Cape Renard Tower, Attempt. It was reported that bad weather and lack of time prevented Julian Freeman-Atwood and Crag Jones (U.K.) from making the first ascent of Cape Renard Tower (747 m) at the northeast end of the Lemaire Channel on the Antarctic Peninsula. On February 12, the pair were dropped off by the yacht *Pelagic*, set up base camp 25 meters above the sea, and made an initial foray up a rocky gully to the west. They fixed two pitches, during which reconnaissance the pair found the rock to be sound basalt rather than the rotten granite they had feared. Over the next seven days, however, they also found that their initial choice of ascent lines was also a natural avalanche chute. On February 22 they abandoned further attempts and concentrated instead on reaching a hanging snow/ice couloir that began 150 meters above their base camp cave. A rock ramp to the east followed by one or two poorly protected pitches at British 5a/5b gave access to the couloir. They then climbed 12 pitches of snow couloir (mostly Scottish 3 with several harder steps) before deteriorating weather forced them to make an uncomfortable bivouac close to the base of the rocky headwall about 200 meters below the summit. Further bad weather the following day signaled the end of their ascent and the beginning of 17 rappels back to base camp.

The weather during the next four days was near-perfect. After a rest and removal of their fixed lines from the first gully, the pair made one last attempt over some new rock to their previously climbed gully. A large flake dislodged by Jones while leading pulled him off the rock, resulting in injured ribs and stopping their last attempt. (*High Mountain Sports* 166)

EUROPE

King Albert Medal of Merit Award. The King Albert Memorial Foundation awarded its King Albert Medal of Merit to Dr. Charles S. Houston, who is an Honorary Member of the AAC. The King Albert Foundation is an institution founded in memory of the late King Albert of the Belgians, who perished in a solo rock climb at Marche LesDames near Brussels in 1934. In awarding the medal, the Foundation cited Dr. Houston's studies, distinguished research, and leadership as follows:

"Dr. Charles S. Houston, born in New York in 1913, Mountaineer, Scientist, Teacher and Doctor of Medicine, first brought to the world's attention the previously obscure illness High