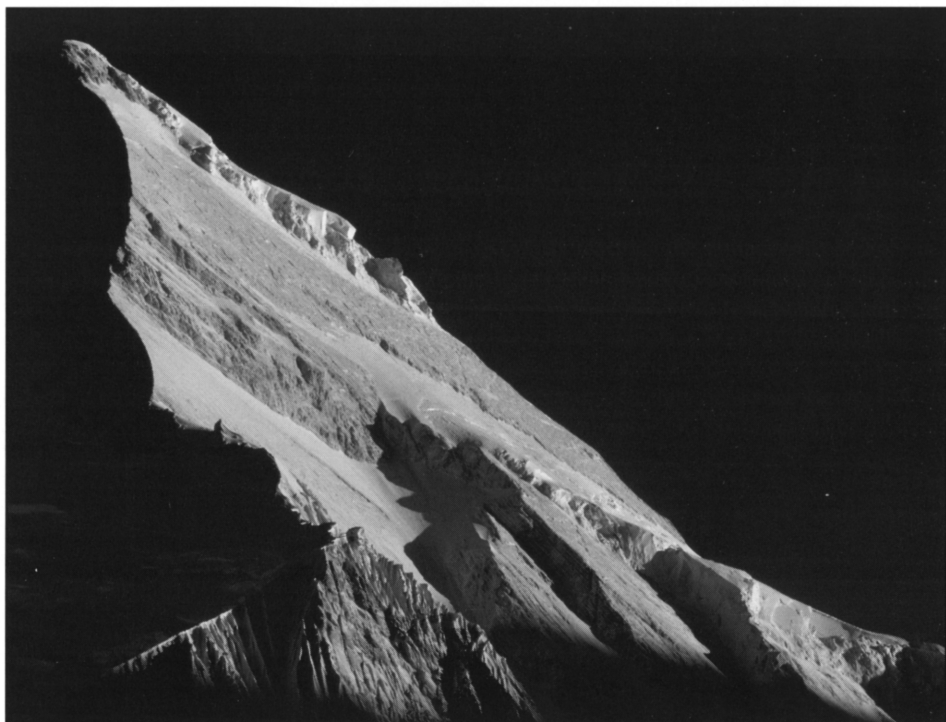


*Peak Pobeda, Ascent, and American Snow Leopard.* By reaching the summit of Peak Pobeda (7439 m) on August 22, during a two-man, alpine-style ascent, Andy Evans joined only a handful of non-Soviet mountaineers in the "Order of the Snow Leopard." This honorary title is claimed by those who have climbed all five 7000-meter peaks of the Former Soviet Union. These peaks are Peaks Communism (7495 m), Lenin (7134 m), and Korzhenevsky (7105 m) in the Pamirs of Tadjikistan, and Khan Tengri (7010 m) and Peak Pobeda in the Tien Shan Range of Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan.

Evans and Australian Paul Walters encountered Denali-like storms and temperatures on the 3400-meter route up Pobeda, similar to those described in Randy Starrett's 1986 *AAJ* account of the first foreign ascent. The short climbing season, infamous weather, and six-kilometer summit ridge above 7000 meters conspire to make Pobeda an elusive summit that has claimed nearly 90 lives.

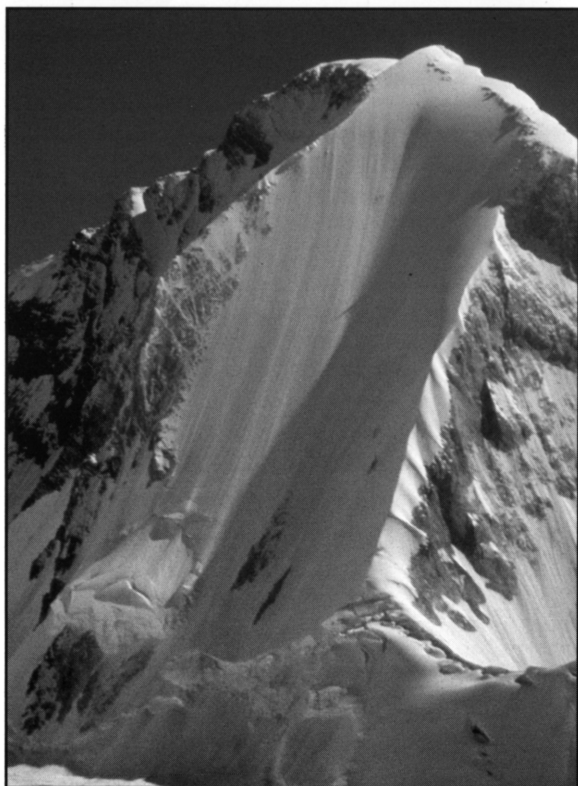


*Khan Tengri. Ace Kvale*

*Tien Shan, Ascents and Descents.* We traveled into the Tien Shan for an adventure film for the Outdoor Life channel. Our group consisted of adventure skiers Doug and Emily Coombs, skier and cameraman Bill Gallen, snowboarder John Griber and skier/director Michael Brown. We arrived July 26 at the Khan Tengri Base Camp (13,400'). On July 28, we landed via helicopter atop a 17,400-foot summit named Wyatt Peak, after Exum guide Rick Wyatt, who described this peak at the end of the Isykul Glacier Valley, east of Khan Tengri. It provided an excellent corn descent of no more than 45 degrees and very few crevasses. On July 30, Doug, Emily, Bill and John attempted to climb a peak we nicknamed Humpty Dumpty (17,000') because of its shape.



The ridge is the prominent sky line visible from Base Camp. We were forced to descend from 16,000 feet because of breakable crust and knee-deep sugar; the upper turns were deceptively steep, in the low- to mid-50-degree range. From Humpty Dumpty, the team scouted the ski run of a lifetime: "Goodman Peak," an unclimbed, unskied, 20,600-foot peak with an intimidating (55- to 60-plus degrees), smooth, featureless face that offers 5,500 vertical feet of skiing with a complex serac fall/bergschrund system at the bottom. Goodman Peak presents a highly technical problem; given the ever-changing snow conditions at this altitude, whether it can be skied from top to bottom is unknown. Unfortunately,



*Above: Emily Coombs schralpin' in the Tien Shan. John Grier. Right: The unskied challenge of Goodman Peak.*

Doug Coombs

due to time, limited equipment and weather, the team was not prepared for such an undertaking. On August 1, we flew to the base of "Discovery Peak" (19,200'). John, Bill and Michael climbed to 16,600 feet but again were forced to descend due to weather. Our trio met Doug and Emily and decided to wait out the storm at camp. Unfortunately due to time constraints and new snow we were unable to make another attempt of Discovery. Of the very limited skiable peaks in this region Discovery had the most reasonable and aesthetic skiable ridge line. Discovery Peak is a very skiable peak and a great way to acclimatize for other climbs in the area. The Tien Shan offers limitless technically demanding ski and board descents.

JOHN GRIBER, *unaffiliated*

*South Inylchek Glacier, Various Ascents.* It was reported that in this popular region, which gives access to the well-known Khan Tengri (6995 m) and Peak Pobeda (7439 m), an important repetition was made when a four-man team from St. Petersburg (P. Kniazev, A. Pashin, V. Reznik, and S. Uspenski) climbed the main summit of Pobeda via the long traverse over the west ridge from Pik Neru (6744 m) and the intervening Vasha Pshaveli (Pobeda West, 6918 m). It was further reported that Pobeda received many ascents last year (25 by Russian climbers), and Khan Tengri saw 30 climbers to its summit. (*High Mountain Sports* 165)

*C.I.S. Competitions, 1996.* Russia is the only country in the world where mountaineers who make ascents in various mountains then send in their accounts to an arbitration board appointed annually by the Russian Mountaineering Federation to contend for the National Championship titles, which recognize the best climbers of the season. Mountaineers also submit their climbs to qualify for the highest sports distinctions of the country: Master of Sports and Master of Sports, International Class. [*An account of climbing competitions in the C.I.S. appears earlier in this journal.*]

Participation in the National Championships gives climbers an opportunity to receive some traveling expenses from their homes to the mountain regions. Such a sum can be up to \$100 per person for travel to the Caucasus and up to \$400 for the Pamir and Tien Shan.

Nine teams applied for participation in the winter class (January and February) ascents. The ascent of Mt. Ushba's South Summit by A. Kustovski's route (6B) was recognized as the best by the arbitration board. It was climbed by Alexander Pogorelov and Vitaly Polokhov from Rostov and turned out to be the second winter ascent of the route.

In general, winter climbs in 1996 were carried out only in two areas: the Kyrgyz range of the Tien Shan, and the Caucasus. In the Kyrgyzskiy Alatau Mountains (location of Ala Archa National Park), the following climbs were recorded. The third winter ascent up the north face of Pik Svobodnaya Korea (leader: Sergey Borisov, Ekaterinburg); the first ascent of Pik Semenov-Tienshanski up the right side of the west face (leader: Ivan Plotnikov, Barnaul); the second winter ascent of the Fifth Tower of Korona, up its south face (leader: Sergey Bernatski, St. Petersburg) and also the second winter ascent of the First Tower of Korona up the ice couloirs of its northwest face (leader: Andrei Drakin, Barnaul). In the Caucasus: Ushba North by the northwest face, third winter ascent (leader: Alexandr Moiseev, Rostov); central Shkhelda by the M.Khergiani route (leader: Sergey Schepachkov, Moscow); Suganbashi up the east face, first winter ascent (leader: Kazbek Khamitsaev, North Osetia).

Competitions for the best ascent in the ice/snow class were conducted for the first time in the