

gave way. It missed Kearney and dropped 100 feet onto Mascioli, killing him instantly. Kearney then spent two and a half days rappelling the wall with one rope, reaching the glacier on June 8.

Mt. Hunter, South Face, Variation. On June 11, Jack Tackle and I flew into the Thunder Glacier (6,800') below the south face of Mt. Hunter. Our objective was a face at the end of the cirque, but due to the steady stream of serac fall scraping our intended route, we decided to put our efforts elsewhere. We saw a line up the south face that would intersect the Southwest Ridge (Kearney, 1979) and decided to try this instead. For the next six nights we waited for freezing temperatures to make travel safer and faster. On the early morning of the June 17, we started up. Unbeknownst to us, a part of the route we were attempting had been climbed in 1989 by Preston and Ruddle and named *Eroica*.

The route started up-glacier at an obvious ice couloir below some relatively stable seracs. Jack and I simulclimbed the ice for a few thousand feet up to where we intersected the 1989 route. We then continued up the long snow ramp system of *Eroica* that put us at the upper rock band on the face (11,500'). We chose a more direct line than the one done in 1989. We had enjoyable, moderately hard mixed climbing for eight pitches. At the end of these technical difficulties, we intersected the Southwest Ridge, where we set up the tent (12,150').

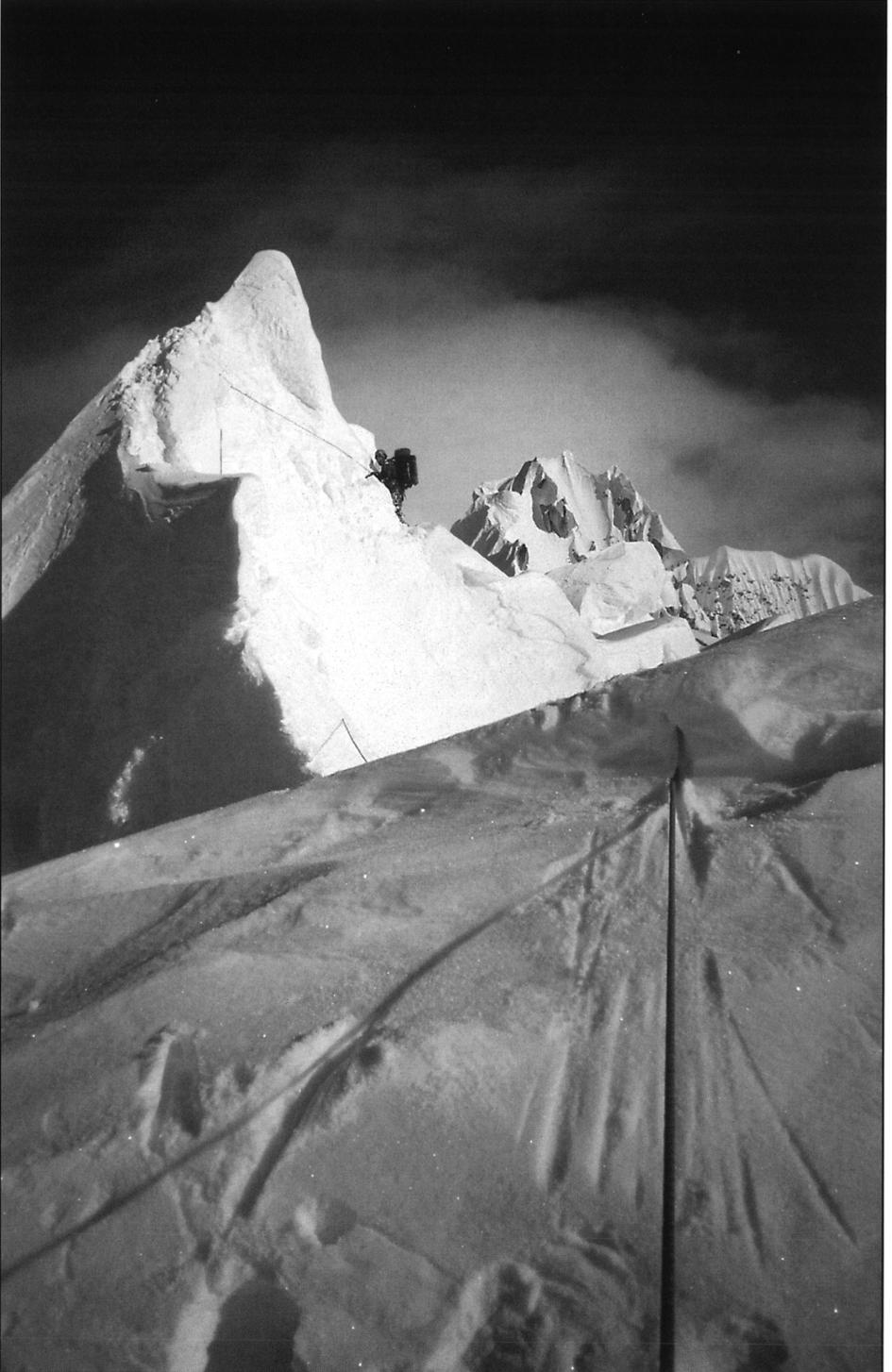
The next day, we attempted to reach the summit via Kearney's route. Unfortunately, we were in a whiteout for most of the upper section, but did manage to climb to within 200 feet of the summit. We waited for quite some time for a small clearing to occur so we could see where we were, but when this failed to happen, we retreated.

On the 19th, we descended the Southwest Ridge. This ended up being quite complex and tedious. We did not have freezing conditions and found ourselves doing many more rappels than anticipated. We didn't research the descent route much and wrongly assumed that it would be a cruise. It took us 28 rappels and all day to get back down to the glacier. The Southwest Couloir was just a constant stream of wet avalanches, which made us all the more thankful to get out of there. We named our variation *Sound of Freedom* after all the sonic booms we heard from the flyboys while we were climbing.

DOUG CHABOT

Mt. Hunter, Southeast Spur, Third Ascent. Jeff Apple Benowitz and I started up the initial couloir of the Southeast Spur on May 24. Once on the ridge proper, a few pitches of snow and mixed climbing brought us to the base of a 350-foot headwall. The first pure aid moves looked down an impressive and airy 2,000-foot drop. Jeff dangled from an A1 overhang, then swam up a corner gushing with water. We found a small ledge and called it home. Our first night on the route had us almost spooning because one quarter of the Bibler was hanging over the great beyond. After more A1 with occasional free moves and easy mixed climbing, the second day brought us to the top of the headwall. Jeff snapped the hammer off his ice tool. I accidentally trundled a rock that chopped 65 feet off our rope. The remaining 135 feet had many mushy spots of questionable strength. Commitment was not a big problem from there; bailing would have been as difficult as continuing.

A section called "The Court of the Lords" traversed horizontally with steep snow walls and small rock outcroppings. While we had much better conditions than the previous parties, we encountered everything from plastic ice to unconsolidated corn snow. We reverted to a night schedule because the snow was even worse during the day. Using a Fairbanks belay (the rope threaded between protrusions on the ridge), we weaved across the sharp and often



Rick Studley on the start of Mt. Hunter's South Ridge. JEFF APPLE BENOWITZ

heinously corniced ridge. Pickets or deadman-type devices proved mostly worthless in the unconsolidated fluff that graced a lot of the ridgetop; they were, however, far superior to ice tools when mining up steep, shitty snow, and we used them the same way we would use the shaft of an ice tool.

We groveled up to stand on the South Ridge. Officially, we had completed the Southeast Spur, but it only marked a middle point in the climb. The South Ridge lay ahead. Waterman had done the first ascent of the South Ridge, too. It resembled a troupe of cone-hatted gnomes who had been tortured, strung on a line, and frozen in hell. There was no respite in sight for us.

The famed "Happy Cowboys Pinnacle" was only a few difficult rope lengths away from our initial camp on the South Ridge. Snaking, fluttering blades of snow and rock radiated out in all directions along this stretch of ridge. Small portions of the pinnacle needed to be scooted across cowboy-style; Jeff led a foot-wide piece of snow with vertical sides by straddling it and spurring his way forward. As it is theoretically safe for the second person, I walked the tight rope upright. An enormous adrenaline buzz fueled me as we polished off the next section of ridge and made camp within sight of the end.

On the ninth day of the trip, we tackled the final obstacle, the "Changabang Arête," a 900-foot arête composed of all the alpine mediums. There were rock moves, some sloppy ridge, and several hundred feet of organic ice. The order of the day was traversing up and left over castle-like fortifications of snow and ice that steepened to near vertical, with one section of overhanging styrofoam snow. Eventually, it was Jeff's lead again. I begged it from him. The rest of the route consisted of moderate, solid blue ice.

I belayed Jeff over the abrupt lip that separated the South Ridge from the 13,000-foot summit plateau. We shared a bagel and a hug. It was a quick transition from the steep ice of the arête to the horizontal expanse of the plateau. We could only begin to ponder how it had felt to John after nearly three months of solo climbing. On a day when the rest of the universe huddled in clouds, we waltzed to the top sans shirts for some hero photos. It took us seven more days to reach base camp via the north summit. We descended the West Ridge to the Northwest Basin route and back to base camp, where Base Camp Annie greeted us warmly. She was happy to see us.

RICK STUDLEY*, *unaffiliated*

*Recipient of an American Alpine Club Mountaineering Fellowship Grant

Denali, New Route. The northeast side of Mt. McKinley attracted our attention even before literature about the region became accessible to us. After reading Jon Waterman's book *High Alaska*, it became clear that our route would closely follow the *Traleika Spur* route, which was climbed for the only time in 1973. The members of our team were Fedor Lounev (Leader, 40), Otto Chkhetiani (35), Iliya Mikhalev (35) and Dimitry Oborotov (33), all from Moscow; all had experience in high-altitude ascents and long glacier expeditions in the Pamir and Tien Shan mountains.

We started from Wonder Lake on June 20. After fording the McKinley River and shuttling loads, we established base camp on McGonagall Pass on June 25. To acclimatize and view an ascent route from the side, we went into the upper Brooks Glacier to Silverthrone Col. We began to move at night. In this mode, we made it up to 11,000 feet. We made an easy ascent of Mt. Silverthrone on June 30. Before us, excellent views of the east side of McKinley and the nearest Alaskan Range peaks opened up. (On the pass, we found an old cache, presumably from World War II times). We descended to the main fork of the Traleika Glacier on the