

trouble. As Eric Shipton wrote in 1938 after several attempts on the mountain, "The ascent of Everest, like any other human endeavor, is only to be judged by the spirit in which it is attempted. . . . Let us climb peaks . . . not because others have failed, nor because the summits stand 28,000 feet above the sea, nor in patriotic fervor for the honor of the nation, nor for cheap publicity. . . . Let us not attack them with an army, announcing on the wireless to a sensation-loving world the news of our departure and the progress of our subsequent advance."

The mass appeal of the 1996 Everest story relates to the clear violation of every one of Shipton's tenets of more than a half-century ago in a new era in which blame is God.

GALEN ROWELL

Everest: The History of the Himalayan Giant. Roberto Mantovani. Introduction by Kurt Diemberger. Mountaineers Books: Seattle, 1997. 143 pages. Hardback, large format, with numerous historical images and color photographs. \$35.00

If you enjoyed Walt Unsworth's *Everest*, but were left craving for sumptuous color photos of Chomolungma and her various climbs, this is your book. The quality and prodigious numbers of these Italian-printed pictures (some in sepia, others hand-colored, many not seen before) are of impeccably high quality. And for once, a sensitive, skillfully written text matches the awe-inspiring imagery. Roberto Mantovani obviously has done his homework, and leads us capably through the stages of Everest's development. From the India surveys of the mid-19th century to Mallory and Irvine in 1924, Hillary and Tenzing in '53, Hornbein and Unsoeld in '63, Messner and Habeler in '78, and Loretan and Troillet in '86, the whole colorful cast of characters is here, driven upward by ego, fame, and desire, and struck down callously by high-altitude edema, capricious storms, and disastrous fate. To these many tales, Kurt Diemberger adds a cautionary and typically heartfelt introduction.

This stylish book is a joy to read and browse. It also will inspire dreams of treading the cold, snowy heights, especially while sitting in a warm, cozy armchair. The book's only noticeable shortcoming is in the otherwise useful expedition-by-expedition compendium, "All the Ascents," where, regrettably, several photo captions don't match the photos. (Other captions and photos are switched on pages 81, 88, 89, and 139.) On page 29, the upper portion of the Messner Route is marked wrong. On pages 30 and 31, our 1988 Kangshung Pace route is marked incorrectly and an accompanying photo and caption is switched. Furthermore, our climb was an International expedition, not a British-led effort, it does end on the South Col (not near it), and Stephen Venables had three companions on his ascent, not two, an unfortunate mistake Diemberger also perpetuates.

Additionally, the famous ice axe was Irvine's (a little known, yet verified fact), and the book concludes with "The Chaos of the Last Seasons," a chapter chronicling the tangled web of recent "guided expeditions" and the 1996 tragedy.

ED WEBSTER

Everest, Mountain Without Mercy. Broughton Coburn. Introduction by Tim Cahill, afterword by David Breashears. National Geographic Society, 1997. Color photographs. 256 pages. \$35.00.

Everest, Mountain without Mercy is the story of the 1996 International IMAX Expedition to Mount Everest whose goal it was to carry an IMAX camera to the summit of the world. From the beginning of the project in 1994, expedition leader and head

camera man David Breashears had his hands full. After experimenting with the normal 85-pound IMAX camera on Mt. Washington in winter, he realized that enormous modifications had to be made to adapt it to the harsh high altitude and arctic environment of Everest. The IMAX format is three times larger than 70-mm film and uses film at the rate of 5.6 feet per second. A 500-foot roll of film weighing 51 pounds would last a mere 90 seconds.

Breashears, working with the IMAX Corporation's engineering department, built a new camera for Everest. Its weight could not exceed 261 pounds and it had to function reliably in temperatures of -40°F. Large control knobs would allow the oxygen-deprived operator to run the camera with the simplest of technique.

When he was satisfied with the new camera, Breashears began the major task of organizing the 1996 International IMAX Expedition. This expedition, funded by MacGillivray-Freeman Films and the National Science Foundation, included as team members: Robert Schauer, assistant camera man; Ed Viesturs, America's strongest high-altitude climber, who had already summited Mt. Everest four times; Araceli Segara of Catalonia, Spain; Jamling Norgay, son of the famous Sherpa of Everest, Tenzing Norgay; and Sumiyo Tsuzuki of Japan. The team was truly an international team with young climbers on their first trip to Everest and older Everest veterans to lead the way. Sherpas, led by Sirdar Wongchu Sherpa, also would add to the success. Without Sherpa power, a filming project of this magnitude would not get out of base camp.

The Everest IMAX Expedition's story would be a great book by itself, but expeditions are no longer on the mountain alone. Everest is not a wilderness experience and must be shared, like it or not. In the spring of 1996, the Everest IMAX team shared the base camp with 13 other expeditions. This caused the base-camp population to swell to more than 300 climbers and Sherpa staff.

In addition to the traditional expeditions from various countries, there was a new breed of expedition, the "commercial, for-profit expeditions." Leaders like Scott Fischer, Rob Hall, Todd Burleson, Pete Athens and Henry Todd arrived with clientele paying up to \$65,000 each for the opportunity to climb Mt. Everest with these experienced Everest veterans. There surely was an edge of competition amongst them, especially between the two largest expeditions led by Scott Fischer and Rob Hall. Success was extremely important to these climbers' businesses. Clients, paying \$65,000 each, expect success.

As has been well-documented elsewhere, things went very wrong on Everest on May 10. A blizzard claimed the lives of eight climbers, including Scott Fischer and Rob Hall.

The IMAX team was in Camp II and responded in the rescue effort, saving and rescuing survivors of a terrific night out. This book gives the reader an on-the-scene account of Mt. Everest's most tragic event.

After the events of the May 10 tragedy, most of the expeditions on the mountain packed it up and went home. The Everest IMAX Team regrouped and faced the challenge of placing the IMAX camera on the roof of the world. Filming Everest with IMAX photography has created the most spectacular mountain movie ever filmed. *Everest, Mountain Without Mercy* is their story.

This is not a cheap, quickly put together book. Its 256 pages are of the highest quality paper to allow for not only "can't put down reading," but also to enhance the reproduction of the excellent color photography. Team members' photos and IMAX camera images make this a wonderful combination of coffee table book with a story to go with it. This book was awarded Literary Achievement of the Year by the American Alpine Club for 1997. The afterword by David Breashears is the frosting on the cake, making *Everest, Mountain Without Mercy*, in my opinion, the finest book about Mt. Everest ever published.

RICK WILCOX