



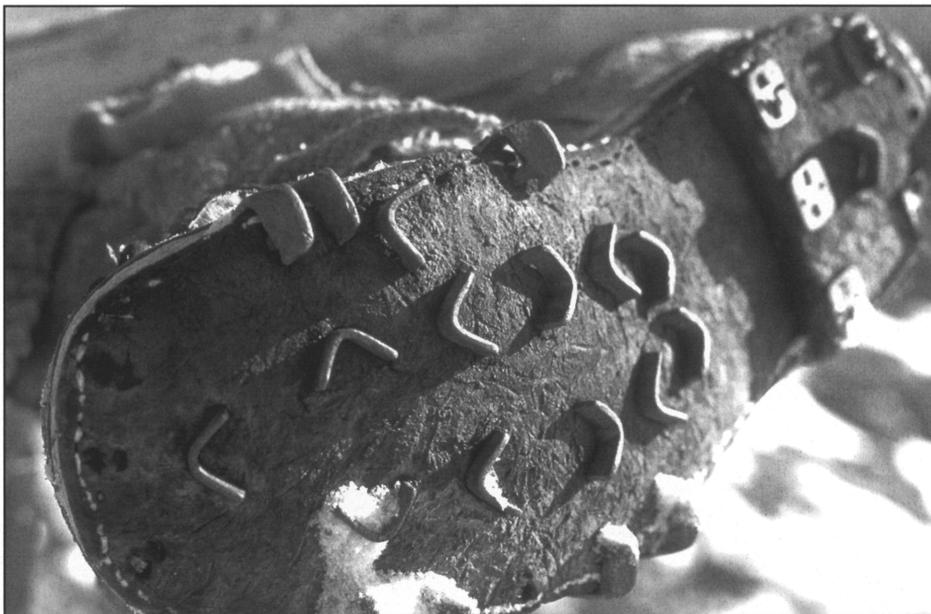
*The north face of Mt. Everest, showing Camp VI, the resting place of George Leigh Mallory (base of the cross) and the First (1), Second (2) and Third (3) steps. THOMAS POLLARD*

On May 13, the team was back at CV for a summit attempt. Pinned down by high winds for three days, they were able to push to CVI on May 16, where Anker, Hahn, Norton and Richards remained to attempt the summit with Dawa Nuru and Ang Passang. Politz and Pollard, in support of the climbers, descended to CV, returning via the Mallory site on the way down to recheck the area with a metal detector for anything missed from the first search. On May 17, Anker and Hahn reached the summit in marginal weather, and returned to CVI. In the process, Anker attempted to free climb the Second Step. (His thoughtful analysis follows.) Norton, Richards, Dawa Nuru and Ang Passang abandoned their summit bid below the Second Step but recovered a 1924 oxygen cylinder on the North Ridge just below the First Step.

Interesting evidence of the 1924 climb was discovered by our team. In addition to the 1924 oxygen cylinder, we recovered various items of personal equipment from Mallory's remains, including an altimeter, goggles, a pocket knife and a complete inventory itemizing the provisions carried to CVI by the porters on June 7, 1924, for their summit bid. However, nothing recovered has definitively proven the high point of Mallory and Irvine's climb, and nothing about their route or summit bid is certain other than their ultimate demise on the mountain.

ERIC SIMONSON

*Mount Everest, Discovery of the Body of George Mallory and Free Attempt of the Second Step.* [On finding the body of George Mallory outside the search zone:] The probable location of the Chinese Camp VI, as defined by Jochen Hemmleb, was too high on the ill-defined ridge. There was no evidence of rock being moved, and it seemed unlikely anyone would pitch a camp that high. Traversing lower, I began scanning the basin and looked to the west.



*George Leigh Mallory's hobnailed boot.* THOMAS POLLARD

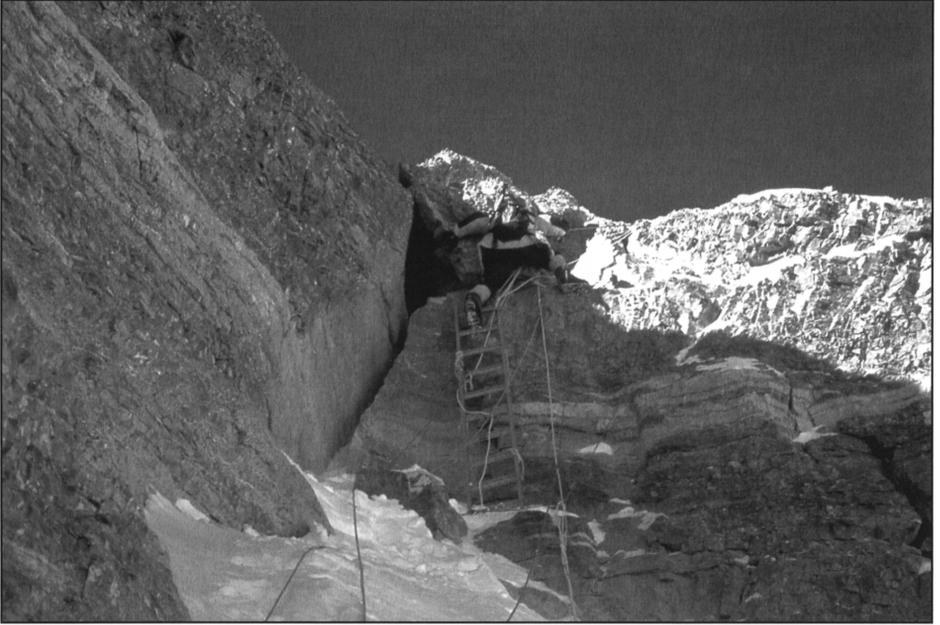
I had a great interest in the cliff bands (circumvented by Messner in August, 1980) that form the First and Second Step. At this point, I was well out of the search zone and began traversing back, which is when I saw the remains of George Mallory.

On June 8, 1924, Noel Odell sighted Mallory and Irvine topping one of the rock steps along the Northeast Ridge. Since that fateful afternoon, at which step they were last seen has been a matter of lengthy discussion. "I noticed far away on a snow slope leading up to what seemed to me to be the last step but one from the base of the final pyramid, a tiny object moving and approaching the rock step," recounted Odell. Was it the Second Step that Odell observed them climbing with relative ease?

Odell's observation places them on the Northeast Ridge, not the broad slopes below the First Step traversing in the Great (Norton) Couloir. If Mallory and Irvine were successful, their climbing route would include a 90-foot vertical barrier at an elevation of 28,300 feet: the Second Step, the most challenging bit of it all. The route ascends from the North Col, weaving through a series of slopes terraced with the occasional cliff until it intersects the Northeast Ridge, setting the stage for some of the finest high-altitude climbing. The real "business" begins at 27,760 feet with the First Step and continues on an exposed traverse for several rope lengths, culminating with the crest of the Second Step some 500 feet higher. Above and below this segment of the 1924 route, the terrain would be easily climbed, even 75 years ago with equipment of that era.

At the beginning of our expedition, I thought the Second Step to be possible for the 1924 climbers. Perhaps the arête or the rock in the vicinity would be peppered with incut holds, making the passage strenuous but feasible. On May 17, Dave Hahn, Jake Norton, Tap Richards, Danuru Sherpa, Ang Pasang Sherpa and I set out from high camp with the intention of filming my evaluation and attempt to free climb the Second Step.

Much has been speculated about a diagonal crack to the right of the dihedral. Could this be



*The Second Step, with the ladder installed by the Chinese in 1975. Anker attempted to free the wide crack to the left of the ladder. FRED BARTH*

the hidden passage that allowed Mallory and Irvine to climb the Second Step? Theorists speculated a grade (probably 5.6) without having ever been on it. With this in mind, I first probed about in an effort to climb it. The rock was rather loose, horribly unprotected and very strenuous in nature. I realized immediately that this was not the natural way, the line of least resistance. The dihedral climbed by the Chinese in 1960 is the logical line for the Second Step.

In the shady recesses of the Second Step, the opening moves begin at the base of the crack that defines this prow-like feature. Three large blocks lead the route slightly to the right, away from a wide flare to a chimney crack. The climbing is awkward—a series of high steps with insecure mantles. The last 20 feet of the shale cliff band end in a dihedral with a four-inch crack in the back. To the right of this, the 1975 Chinese expedition installed a ten-rung ladder which, along with the fixed rope, has been used ever since.

I removed my mittens, tied off my pack and spun my arms about in an attempt to warm my hands. With Dave's secure belay, I began with a series of fist jams, stemming with my right foot on good edges. The climbing was spectacular and demanding—rarely does one find a cliff of such a nature at altitude, steeped in such history.

The route moves to the right, intersecting the placement of the ladder. I placed a three-inch cam and fumbled about trying to find edges that weren't obscured by the ladder. Unfortunately, as one is prone to do at high altitude, I fizzled out. In desperation and weakness, I matched feet on the second to last rung of the Chinese ladder as I moved to the right.

How hard was it? Was it possible in 1924? I experienced the terrain in dry pre-monsoon Everest conditions similar to the type of ground Mallory and Irvine must have encountered. The climbing could best be described as "heads-up tricky terrain" on loose shale with the occasional patch of wind-hammered snow in between. The features slope the wrong direction; the cracks are shallow, brittle and poorly protectable. For a climber unfamiliar with

exposure, as Irvine was, this terrain would be exhausting. The traversing forces one to move along a double fall line, which requires great concentration.

What would the rating be? As I climbed it, with the aid of the ladder, I would call it 5.10 A0—damn hard. To have basically “onsight” soloed this pitch with hobnail boots and no protection is beyond that of which I believe the early climbers were capable. No trace of their rappel setup was ever found on the block above the step, and for Mallory and Irvine to downclimb a tenuous fist crack would be even more demanding and unlikely.

My inability to make the moves reinforces my belief that Mallory and Irvine were not able to surmount this formidable obstacle.

CONRAD ANKER

*Gyachung Kang, North Face, New Route, and Other Ascents.* In the autumn, a Slovenian expedition led by Andrej Štremfelj made a number of first ascents in the Mahalangur Himal before climbing a new route on the north face of Gyachung Kang. A full account of the climbs appears in an article by Marko Prezelj earlier in this journal.

*Cho Oyu, Tichy Route, Self-Supported Women's Ascent.* We were a team of American women friends (Supy Bullard, leader, and Georgie Stanley, co-leader; Caroline Byrd, Kathryn Hess, Cara Liberatore, Liane Owen) with a goal to be the first American women's team to climb an 8000-meter peak without supplemental oxygen or Sherpa support. We left Kathmandu on April 1. Since we were “trucking” to Base Camp at 16,600 feet, we wanted to start acclimatizing on the approach. To this end, we spent two nights in Nyalam and two nights in Tingri. After spending three days at “Chinese” BC, we moved up to Advanced Base Camp at 18,600 feet and went to work on the mountain. The only glitch in our plans came early. A Norwegian team trying (later successfully) to climb Cho Oyu and Shishapangma in the same season had arrived early to Cho Oyu and their Sherpas had fixed the mountain. We thought it contrived to ignore these lines and fix our own set, so we used them, thereby compromising our goal of self-sufficiency.

We established Camp I at 21,000 feet, CII at 23,000 feet on April 20 and CIII at 24,500 feet. We climbed in two teams of three and on May 4, Supy, Kathryn and I reached the summit on a calm, clear day. On May 6, Cara, Caroline and Liane headed up but were turned back on their way to CIII by the first storm of the monsoon. We departed ABC on May 13. Thanks to the AAC and our friends and family for supporting our endeavor!

GEORGIE STANLEY, *unaffiliated*

*Menlungtse, Attempt, and Milarepa, Ascent.* We arrived at the upper meadows of the Menlung Valley beneath the north face of Menlungtse on September 3. We set up Base Camp (4900m) in the normal monsoon weather of clear mornings followed by rain in the afternoons and evenings. A few days later, Martin Zabaleta decided to return home. Mark Price, Andrew Brash, and I stayed on to attempt to climb both Menlungtse and several unclimbed and unnamed peaks just north of Menlungtse. Particularly interesting was point 6262 meters on the Chinese maps.

On September 14, we camped at 5420 meters on the compact west glacier of a small, unnamed peak northeast of our BC. On the morning of the 15th, after the normal snowfall during the night, I made what was probably the first ascent of this peak (ca. 5610m) by its