



The west face of Kiukiurtliu, with the west summit of Europe's highest point, Mt. Elbrus (5642m), to the left. The Lukashvilly and Andreev routes take the center of the prominent headwall.

ELEXEY SOLOVIOV

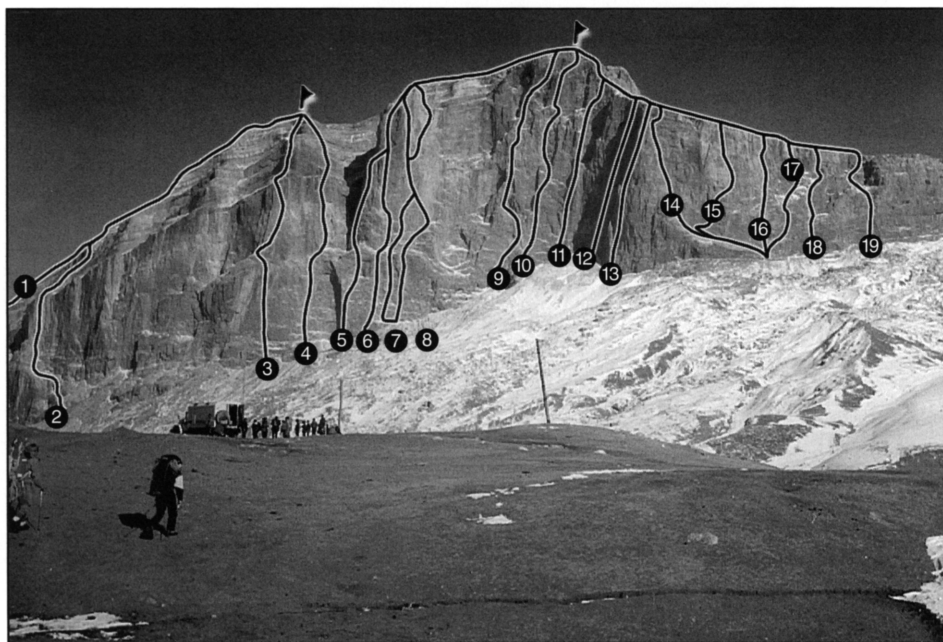
with Igor Cheresku (leader of Shkhelda Emergency Rescue service), greeted the new millennium on the West Summit (5642m) of Elbrus in strong winds, heavy snowfall and temperatures below -30°C . The team made a video of the last millennium sunset as seen from the saddle of Elbrus (5300m) and the new millennium sunrise as seen from the East Summit (5621m). The video and digital images were transmitted from the saddle via special cellular phone and were broadcast by all the central TV channels of Russia.

VLADIMIR SHATAEV and VLADIMIR KOPYLOV, *Russian Mountaineering Federation*

Mt. Shkhelda, Second West Peak, North Face, New Route. In the beginning of January, I started my new project, "Open Caucasus," the goal of which is to promote an interest in the Caucasus region through a series of extreme first ascents from 2001 to 2003. Victor Bobok (Moscow) and I did the first ascent of the north face of Shkhelda's Second West Peak (4310m) in the Central Caucasus. This face had challenged climbers for many years. The main problems of the face are the dangerous icefalls that shoot through the lower and middle parts of potential routes. The upper part of this route is 17 pitches of ice and mixed climbing. It is 1700 meters from the foot to the summit. The first ascent took two and a half days.

YURI KOSHELENKO, *Russia*

Yarydag, New Route. Yarydag, located in the republic of Daghestan in the south of Russia, is part of a ten-kilometer by 15-kilometer plateau located on the border of Azerbaijan and Russia. It is about 250 kilometers from Makhachkala, the capital of Daghestan, and 80 kilometers from the Caspian Sea. The plateau is bordered on all sides by walls. The most important and complex walls are on the west and northwest aspects, where the walls range from



The west, northwest, and north faces of Yarydag, as seen from the village of Kurush, showing: 1. E. Radoshkevich (5A, 1980). 2. V. Ruchka (5A, 1980). 3. V. Gholoshiapov (6A, 1983). 4. E. Radoshkevich (5B, 1981). 5. Northern Edge (6A, Andreev-Koshelenko-Krivitsky-Voronin, 2001). 6. G. Shiedrin (6A, 1981). 7. S. Efimov (6A, 1981). 8. A. Babitskiy (6A, 1981). 9. S. Belousov (5B, 1986). 10. A. Mikhailov (6A, 1982). 11. S. Feldman (5B, 1980). 12. P. Leonov (5B, 1996). 13. Dorro-2000 (5B, 2000). 14. V. Pleskachevskiy (5B, 1987). 15. M. Polyakov (5B, 1980). 16. A. Samoded (5B, 1980). 17. S. Smotrov (5B, 1998). 18. A. Nekrasov (5B, 1986). 19. A. Dubobikov (5A, 1981). 20. A. Nezametdinov (5A, 1979). KONSTANTIN DORRO

300 meters to 1100 meters high, with a steepness of 70 to 85 degrees. The highest part rises above the village of Kurush.

Until 2000, there were 18 routes on this wall, ranging from 5 to 6 on the Russian grading system. The 19th route follows the border of the west and north faces in a big dihedral system. The first attempt was made in February, 1999, when a five-member team led by Konstantin Dorro climbed 200 meters in three days only to be turned back by bad weather. In February, 2000, the Daghestan Rescue Service EMERCOM team returned to the wall and climbed it. It is 900 meters from the base of the route (3020m) to the summit of Yurydag (3925 meters), while the vertical relief of the wall is 600 meters (3020-3620m). The route is 675 meters long with an angle of 80 degrees. The angle of the lower seven pitches is 86 degrees.

The team climbed 400 meters free and 275 meters with aid. Nuts, cams, pitons, skyhooks, expansion bolts, 50-meter ropes, and the Russian aiding system (which consists of hooks attached to the legs) were used in the ascent. Led by Konstantin Dorro, the team consisted of Yuriy Slobodenuyk, Anatoliy Goryaev, Sergey Voronin, Vladimir Sogokon, and the trainer, Ziyabudin Murtuzaliev, who is chief of Daghestan Rescue Service EMERCOM of Russia. The entire team lives in Makhachkala.

The ascent took 14 days (96 working hours). One portaledge was used in the ascent. ABC

was established at 2850 meters, an hour's walk from the wall. The ascent began on February 16. Camp I (3250m) was established on February 22 by the leading team of Dorro, Voronin, and Sogokon. In four days, the team climbed a further 75 meters. The weather was very bad, with snow, cold temperatures (-25°C), and wind. On February 26, Camp II (3370m) was established with the portaledge. At this point, the other team members ascended from ABC with the fuel, food, and equipment. Three hundred and sixty meters of rope were fixed to this point. The lower three ropes were thrown down to the base of the wall (the assistant, Sergey Smotrov, helped bring them to BC). From here, the climbing became easier. Camp III (3480m) was established on February 28 and 180 meters of rope were fixed up to the plateau. Everybody returned to Camp III that night. On February 29, the team climbed onto the plateau, then continued to the top. Base camp was reached at 10 p.m. the same day.

The weather was unstable during the entire ascent. The wall was raked by avalanches after storms. Skyhooks broke two times because of the cold. All team members worked on lead. Four falls were taken during the ascent; the longest was 20 meters. There were no serious injuries. All five team members slept in the portaledge (1.35 wide by 1.95 meters long—we had to crush).

The resulting route, Dorro-2000, on the left buttress of Yarydag's western face, took third place in the Russian mountaineering championship.

KONSTANTIN DORRO, *Daghestan, Russia*

Yarydag, Northwest Face, New Route. Shkhelda lies in the heart of the Caucasus; Yarydag (3925m) is the easternmost point. On the northwest face of Yarydag, Andrey Andreev, Alexei Krivitsky, Sergey Voronin, and I established the new route, *Northern Edge* (VI 5.10 A2+, 1200m), from February 25-March 2. The climb was done in the framework of the winter championship of Russia and the "Open Caucasus" project. The route was climbed mainly free, in bad weather. On the stormy morning of the last day, it was not easy to find the highest point on the huge summit plateau, even with the help of two friends who had come up to meet us and help us find the way down.

My main impressions were that, as a rock route, the climb was too long for winter. The practically constant wind, with gale-force gusts that tried to knock the leader off the wall several times, made the ropes stand upright like cobras captivated by the fakir's flute. Despite the cold, there was high rockfall danger when we were coming onto the summit plateau.

Andrey Andreev and I shared the leadership of the climb, Andrey organizing, I supervising the technical part. Alexei Krivitsky and I fixed the route for three days. During the last stage, Sergey Voronin joined us.

YURI KOSHELENKO, *Russia*

KAZAKHSTAN

DZHUNGARIAN ALATAU

Dzhungarian Alatau, Various Ascents. The team comprised Stuart Batey, Mick Jenkins, John Owens, Catherine Clare, Frank McCorriston, Alan Beeton, Allan Gransden, Carl Burks, Carl Morrish, John Wharry, Darren Weller, and Andrew Grubb. Between us, we were experienced mountaineers and novices, 11 military surveyors, and one medic. We were joined by Kazakh