

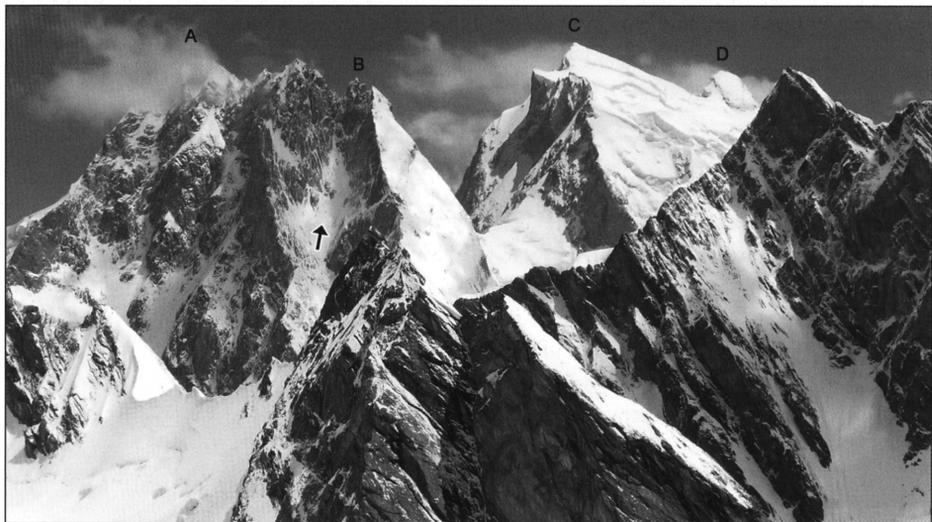
snow in mostly great condition; the only problem was finding a safe place for our small tent. The third day (August 22) we reached the summit in windy weather but with big smiles. It took a day of descending to reach base camp.

During the same period the other three climbers, Nejc Cesen, Rok Sisernik, and Miha Hrastelj, climbed a partial new route on the rock pillars of the south face of the K7 West massif. They named it Luna (1,400m, VII+/V A2). They had hoped to continue to the unclimbed subpeak (ca 6,200m) southwest of K7 West and had carried ice gear for the upper slopes, but they estimated the round trip and subsequent descent from their high point at ca 5,700m would require three more days. They had only one day of food, so they decided to descend. [*Editor's note: Their high point was some distance to the south and ca 300m lower than the top of the Belgian-Polish route of 2007 on the west-facing Badal Wall (AAJ 2008, pp. 80-87).*] The climb took three days, with an additional day (eight hours) for descent by rappel. All of the bivouacs were on narrow, uncomfortable ledges; a portaledge was not carried.

We had planned another two weeks of climbing, but two days after these ascents we received a message about the accident involving our friends Pavle Kozjek and Dejan Miskovic on Muztagh Tower, just 40km away. The next day Hrastelj, Sisernik, and I flew in army helicopters to help with the rescue, and our wonderful stay in K7 base camp was sadly over.

ALES CESEN, *Slovenia*

*Kapura Peak, south summit (ca 6,200m), Wild Wings.* In 1999 on the summit of Amin Brakk, after the first ascent of the west face, I looked over the vast mountain range stretching between K6 and Masherbrum and later sought the name of a mountain that had aroused my interest, reminding me of the north face of an overgrown Grandes Jorasses. It was Kapura Peak (6,544m), first climbed by an American-Slovenian expedition in 2004. It took nine long years



The west side of Kapura Peak, seen from high on the south side of Drifika. (A) Kapura Peak (6,544m), first climbed by an American-Slovenian team in 2004, via the southwest face and northwest ridge (left skyline). (B) South summit (ca 6,200m) of Kapura Peak; Jan Doudlebsky and Marek Holecek climbed the couloir and ridge to the south peak in a three-day round trip. (C) K6 West (7,040m). (D) K6 (7,281m). The long ridge in the foreground extends between Drifika and Amin Brakk. *Marek Holecek*

before I could get to the Charakusa Valley and attempt Kapura. Jan Doudlebsky and I reached base camp below K7 on July 7. After acclimatizing, there was nothing left for us but to find the right approach through the glacier and begin the climb.

After a period of changeable weather with occasional snow, on July 13 we initiated our climb of the huge northwest-facing dihedral on the right side of the west face. After a snowy ramp, we reached the first rock step, totally bare of ice. This unpleasant section led to a rocky corner with an inconsistent layer of ice. At the end of the day we dug a tiny bivouac platform below a large rock barrier.

It began snowing in the morning on July 14. We climbed around the barrier on the left to approach an icefield. As the snowfall continued, powder avalanches became more frequent. We kept pushing to the end of the icefield, where we established a bivy that was even worse than the first one, hanging in harnesses instead of sitting. We were soaked and started to freeze.

On July 15 the sky cleared, and we had a spectacular view of the eastern Karakoram. We continued via a narrow chimney. Mixed climbing prevailed, with some vertical steps of hard ice. The final moves went through a loose, snow-capped overhang. At the col, we climbed the ridge to reach the south summit of Kapura (ca 6,200m) at 12:30 p.m. Without delay we turned around and started to rappel. When the sun reached the wall, the snow turned into a river, but we reached our tent on the glacier at 8 p.m., and the following day reached base camp. We called our route Wild Wings (1,300m, WI5+ M7 70°).



Marek Holecek leading the headwall of Wild Wings (1,300m, WI5+ M7 70°) on Kapura Peak's south summit. Jan Doudlebsky

MAREK HOLECEK, *Czech Republic*

*K7, attempt on southwest pillar; BC Tower, possible first ascent; Badal Wall, attempt.* A team of Slovak climbers visited the Charakusa Valley from June 11 to July 31. Over three days in late June, Gabriel Cmarik, Jan Sofranko, and Viliam Suján attempted the southwest pillar of K7 (6,934m). Encountering difficulties up to VII A2 WI4, they reached the icefield below the Third Tower at ca 5,400m, where poor weather forced them down. [Editor's note: British expeditions led by Dai Lampard attempted this pillar in 1990, 1993, and 2006, reaching a high point of 6,300m, above the Fortress, in 1993.]

Andrej Kolarik and Juraj Svingal made a one-day free ascent of the south-southwest ridge (1,300m, VII) of BC Tower, the rock fin across a glacier and talus gully from Beatrice's southwest face. They found anchors along the route, but these stopped four pitches below the summit, leading them to believe they may have completed a first ascent.

Erik Rabatin, Martin Suchy, and Daniel Sak tried a new route on the left part of the Badal Wall (west face) of K7 West. Sak was injured in a long fall, and the entire expedition helped with the rescue.

VLADO LINEK, *SMU James, Slovakia*