

Mosquito Pass Wall (Peak 2,911'), Hidden Couloir. On a cold day in February, Jeff Collins and I snow-machined in to Mosquito Pass and climbed a narrow, 1,700' sinuous couloir (with some WI2 and M3) on the wall of gneiss to the west of Mosquito Pass.

IAN MCRAE

Note: Reports of several previously unreported new routes in the Kigluaik are posted at aaj.americanalpineclub.org

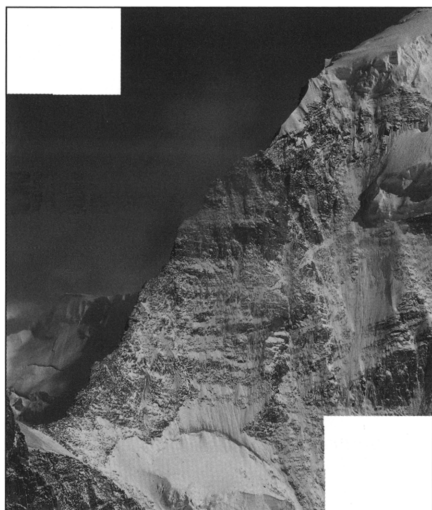
ALASKA RANGE

Geographical note: While the well-known peaks in Denali National Park are often called "The Alaska Range," these peaks form just one part of the immense Alaska Range, which contains many significant subranges, including the Hayes and Delta ranges, and the Revelation, Kichatna, and Tordrillo mountains.

HAYES RANGE

Mt. Balchen, Alchemy Ridge. When my 2009 expedition plans fell through due to partner injury, I scrambled to salvage the season and found a partner in fellow Fairbanks climber Matt Klick. At home in Fairbanks we waited two days to fly in to a gravel strip at the base of the northwest ridge of Mt. Hayes in Rob Wing's Super Cub. From the base of Hayes, we walked seven miles to our base camp in the Hayes basin at 6,500'. After arriving at base camp, we did some recon and made plans to attempt the north ridge of Mt. Balchen as our first objective. Due to bad weather it would be the only route we attempted, and we received only five hours of clear weather while on route. Of our 15 days from June 10–24, 12 had bad weather.

As we left base camp we could see a dense haze approaching from the north and told ourselves we'd bail if the weather got too nasty. Over about 36 hours to and from base camp, we battled marginal weather to complete the first ascent of Balchen's Alchemy (north) Ridge in 14 long pitches. We climbed a beautiful line true to the ridge (V AI4 M7 in the conditions we found, could be IV when dry). To descend we made six raps onto the east face, then downclimbed to the 'schrund and ran under a serac to return to our skis. The route would be a classic in a more traveled range, as would the other routes on Balchen. In dry or even just non-stormy conditions, it would be a pleasurable outing, with many options through the



Alchemy Ridge on Mt. Balchen. Johnson and Klick started from the opposite (Hayes Glacier) side of this photo, climbed to the col and ascended the skyline ridge. Jeff apple Benowitz