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# North America 1991

TED WHALLEY

(with contributions from H Adams Carter and others)

## Alaska Range

**Mt McKinley – SE face** Bob Gammel and Lee James made the first ascent of this face, from the Thayer Basin. They climbed to the crest of the S Buttress and then dropped into the Thayer Basin. After waiting out a blizzard, on 13 June they moved up the right branch of a couloir on the SE face. They climbed to a bivouac at 4875m and again at 5425m, but were trapped for five days. Finally, on June 20, they reached the summit.

**Mt McKinley – Cassin Ridge** Mugs Stump made a remarkably fast solo ascent of this route, leaving the 4275m W Buttress camp, traversing to the W Rib, descending that, climbing the Cassin (in 15 hours) and descending to the 4275m camp a mere 27.5 hours after leaving it. Czechoslovaks Zolo Demján and Igor Valiga climbed a variant to the Cassin, starting left of the usual start and right of the Denali Diamond route. They rejoined the Cassin at 4700m after climbing 1100 new metres.

**Mt McKinley – S face** Miroslav Šmid soloed a new route between the Messner couloir and the Orient Express. Later he soloed the Cassin.

**Mt McKinley – new routes** Five climbers led by Mario Bilodeau climbed two new routes on the massif. The first from a cache at 2400m on the Kahiltna glacier, via the col between Pt 4050m and Pt 4070m. The second route was on the face above Windy Corner, with 11 pitches of 5.8 rock and a finish via the West Buttress Direct. Another new route was also climbed near here, climbing the 1980 West Buttress Direct and finishing by the right hand branch of the couloir instead of the left – 25 pitches of very hard ice.

**Mt McKinley – W Buttress** Among the hoards of ascensionists was the youngest ever – 12-year-old Taras Genet, son of Kathy Sullivan and the late Ray Genet. Like his Dad, is he destined for great things?

**Mt Dickey – S face** An Italian team, led by Fabio Leoni, climbed a difficult new route on the right side of the face.

**Mt Foraker – SE ridge variation** Jack Tackle and Jim Donini climbed a difficult new route up the obvious prong left of the normal SE ridge. Then they climbed a new route on the E face of **Mt Barrille**.

**Mt Huntingdon – S face** On 20–21 May Jay Smith and Paul Teare climbed a difficult new route to the right of the Harvard route. Clay Wadman and Bill Kito failed on another new line – on the W face.

## Kichatna Spires

**Middle Triple Peak – E Buttress** Conrad Anker and Seth Shaw made the second ascent of this very difficult route.

## Lake Clark National Park

**Neocola (2873m)** James Garrett, Lorn Glick and Kennan Harvey climbed this peak via the W face couloir. The mountain had resisted determined previous attempts.

## Alaska – Miscellaneous

**Fairweather (4663m)** A Canadian group, led by David Williams, landed near the mouth of the Alsek river, and worked inland to climb this peak from the north. Then they made a remarkable traverse of several hundred kilometres on the glacier to emerge on Chilkot Inlet, during which they made the first ascent of **Mt Eliza (2960m)**.

**Mt Crillon area** Sam Grubenhof and Silas Wild made several ascents in this region, including **Pt 2713m**.

**Devil's Thumb** Mark Bebie and Bill Pilling climbed two new routes here: the NE face on a 27-hour round trip (2–3 May) and, after two weeks of foul weather and one unsuccessful attempt, the S Buttress.

**Mt Jarvis (4901m)** Hiroshi Oda and Ichiro Mitoda (Japan) were flown to the Nabesna glacier by pilot Ken Bunch. Though Mitoda could not complete the climb, Oda was successful on 6 April. When Bunch flew back to pick them up he got out of the plane and dropped dead from a massive heart attack. The Japanese were finally evacuated by a US Army helicopter.

## Canada

**Mt Logan (6050m)** Geoff Creighton and Dave Nettle climbed the Thunderbird Variation of the Hummingbird Ridge, much of it during a violent storm. Another Alpine Club of Canada team were successful on the W summit and included Don Forest, who celebrated his 71st birthday during the ascent – wow!

**Kluane National Park** A team led by Andrew Lawrence made a circumski of Mts King George and Queen Mary, climbing Mt Queen Mary.

**Mt Alberta** Mark Wilford soloed a remarkable new route here. He started up the 600m ice face on the north, climbed six pitches of rotten rock (up to 5.10) and traversed to the NE ridge. He continued up the ridge and reached the summit after two bivouacs.

Dave MacAdam returned to Nedlukseak Fjord during June/July 1991 and, travelling solo as usual, explored beyond the mountains and the Penny Ice Cap

to the north-western regions of Auyittuq National Park Reserve and reached Confederation Fjord. He then returned to Nedlukseak Fjord and toured the inner fjord by kayak. The weather was very poor, but he climbed twelve mountains.

**Mealy Mountains – Southern Labrador** Dean Eagle and other students from Dartmouth College flew here and skied among the mountains and along the drainage basins and the wide lakes.

**Mt Asgard – N Tower** A team led by Christoph Krah made the first ascent (5.9 A2).

**Mt Asgard – S Tower** A team led by Defrancesco Fabrizio climbed a new route on this tower (5.10 A3 70° ice).

## Continental USA

**Mt Whitney** Galen Rowell and David Wilson climbed a fine new 16-pitch route on the left side of the *Direct East Face* route. On nearby **Keeler Needle** Kevin Steele, Mike Carville and Kevin Brown climbed a new route on the East face.

## In Memoriam

**Norman Read**, mountaineer, skier, big game hunter, oil prospector and the first American to fly with the RFC, died early in 1992 at the age of 101. In 1925 he was a member of the team which made the outstanding first ascent of Mt Logan. It involved an 86-mile trek up the Chitina glacier and from a certain point, where the going got too tough for their horses, the team had to move eight tons of equipment themselves. The weather deteriorated as they reached the summit and it was Read's foresight in planting marker wands that enabled them to find their way down safely. The ascent was made over May–July and by the time they were successful a search party had already been sent in pursuit. In 1950, at the age of 60, Read climbed Mt Logan again – this time with André Roch. Read was a long-standing member of the American Alpine Club and the Alpine Club, resigning from the latter when women were admitted. He didn't hang up his ski boots until he was 97 and attributed his longevity to 'staying single and solvent'.